

A critical examination of recent developments in public participation in urban regeneration with particular reference to Spitalfields, East London.



Andrew Barron

1st September 2005

MSc Town Planning (full-time)

Bartlett School of Planning

University College London

The University of London

UMI Number: U593864

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI U593864

Published by ProQuest LLC 2013. Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.



ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Community participation in urban regeneration has advanced significantly since the Skeffington report was published over 35 years ago. Successive government approaches to local involvement have attempted to move participation beyond government rhetoric to create real and practical opportunities for local communities to get involved.

This dissertation studies community involvement in urban regeneration with a particular reference to the area of Spitalfields in East London. It demonstrates that changes in approach to regeneration have significantly affected the ability for local people to get involved in the improvement of their neighbourhoods. Following recent initiatives launched by the current Labour government and the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, opportunities for participation are at an all time high. However, questions remain concerning the reality of community participation particularly for small and minority groups.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all those who have helped in the preparation of this dissertation. The help of all those who gave up their time for interviews to share their thoughts and opinions of the area was greatly appreciated and I am indebted to you for your expert local knowledge.

I would also like to thank Harry Dimitriou for his help with initial study ideas and research structuring, and Lucy, Celia and Sam for their encouragement, support and help in the final production stage. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Table of Contents

Abstract		2
Acknowledgements		3
Table of Contents		4
List of Figures		7
List of		8
Abbreviations		
Chapter 1	Introduction	9
1.1	Scope of Research	9
1.2	Aims and Objectives	9
1.3	Research Methodology	10
1.3.1	Primary Sources	10
1.3.2	Secondary Sources	10
1.4	Structure	11
Chapter 2	Literature Review	12
2.1	Introduction	12
2.2	The Concept of Community	12
2.2.1	Defining Community	12
2.2.2	Community in the 21 st Century	13
2.3	The Development of Public Participation in Planning and Urban Regeneration	13
2.3.1	1950 – 1969: The Early Years	13
2.3.2	1969: The Skeffington Report	15
2.3.3	1968 – 1979: Changes brought about by Labour policies	16
2.3.4	1979 - 1997: Changes brought about by Conservative policies	16
2.3.5	1997 – Present: Changes brought about by New Labour policies	17
2.4	Justifications for Community Participation in Regeneration	19
2.5	Community Participation	20

2.6	Conclusions	21
Chapter 3	Case Study Reviews	23
3.1	Introduction	23
3.2	Covent Garden	23
3.3	Elephant & Castle	25
3.4	Observations and Lessons	27
3.4.1	Context Specific Lessons	28
3.4.2	Generic Lessons	28
3.5	Conclusions	30
Chapter 4	Spitalfields	31
4.1	Introduction and Background	31
4.1.1	Reasons for Selection	31
4.1.2	Historic Background	33
4.1.3	Socio-Economic Background	36
4.2	Regeneration to Date	39
4.2.1	Bethnal Green City Challenge	39
4.2.2	Cityside Regeneration	41
4.3	Current Community Participation in Urban Regeneration in Spitalfields	44
4.3.1	The Tower Hamlets Partnership	44
4.3.2	The Local Area Partnership	45
4.3.3	The Community Plan	47
4.3.4	Local Area Action Plans	48
4.3.5	The Tower Hamlets Compact	49
4.3.6	Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy	50
4.4	Critical Review of the Current Public Participation Approach	51
4.4.1	The Developers	51
4.4.2	The Community	52
4.4.3	The Local Planning Authority	56
4.5	Conclusion	57

Chapter 5	Conclusions: the Lessons Learnt	58
5.1	Introduction	58
5.2	Context Specific Lessons	58
5.3	Generic Lessons	59
5.4	Key Recommendations and Conclusions	60
References		62
Appendix A	Interviews	68
Appendix B	Transcription of Interview	69

List of Figures

2.1	Arnstein's Ladder of Participation	14
4.1	Location of 'Spitalfields and Banglatown'	32
4.2	Historical timeline of Spitalfields	34
4.3	Historical images in Spitalfields:	35
	A. Spitalfields Market	
	B. Jewish Soup Kitchen (1902)	
	C. Site of Jewish Free School	
	D. Brick Lane	
	E. Bangla City	
4.4	The proximity of Spitalfields and the City	36
4.5	Ethnic make-up of 'Spitalfields and Banglatown' and Bishopsgate wards	37
4.6	Regenerated 18 th Century town houses in the west of Spitalfields	39
4.7	The Chicksand estate in the east of Spitalfields	39
4.8	The Business Development Centre	43
4.9	LAP2 Steering Group Attendance for 2004/2005	46

List of Abbreviations

ABI	Area Based Initiative
CGCA	Covent Garden Community Association
CGFR	Covent Garden Forum of Representatives
CPAG	Community Plan Action Group
ELCF	Elephant Links Community Forum
EMEP	Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project
EZ	Enterprise Zone
GLA	Greater London Authority
GLC	Greater London Council
LAP	Local Area Partnership
LDD	Local Development Document
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NRS	Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PMG	Partnership Management Group
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SCA	Spitalfields Community Association
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SDG	Spitalfields Development Group
SMUT	Spitalfields Market Under Threat
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
THP	Tower Hamlets Partnership
UDC	Urban Development Corporation
UDG	Urban Development Grant
UDP	Unitary Development Plan
UTF	Urban Task Force
UWP	Urban White Paper

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of Research

Urban regeneration is a well used, yet little understood phrase. Efforts at urban regeneration have played a part in the development of virtually all major urban areas in the UK over the past 50 years and have affected the lives of millions of people. Yet today, the problems that urban regeneration attempts to solve continue to “tax the ability and ingenuity of policy-makers, planners, developers and citizens alike” (Roberts, 2000, p.17). There is no set formula for successful urban regeneration and individual urban problems often require unique responses depending on a wide variety of socio-economic factors.

There is a widespread belief that the involvement of local people in regeneration is a beneficial practice, both to the lives of the community and the overall outcome of the scheme. Experience has shown that “solutions which are imposed on a community rather than developed with them won’t deliver lasting change” (DETR, 1998 in ODPM, 2003, p.19). Community involvement in urban regeneration appears to be at the very heart of government policy. Yet studies have consistently shown that lip service has been paid to true community participation and that, in practice, public participation policy has often been found to be little more than rhetoric (Wilson and Wilde, 2003).

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine recent developments in community participation in urban regeneration with particular reference to the regeneration of the Spitalfields area of East London. Conclusions will be drawn and recommendations made for the improvement of community participation in regeneration in both Spitalfields and the UK as a whole.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The four key aims of this dissertation are as follows:

- To critically examine the development of community participation within urban policy and, in particular, its influence on urban regeneration.

- To examine how the current government's urban policy, and in particular the new planning system, will impact on the regeneration of Spitalfields in terms of community participation.
- To gauge the feelings of different stakeholder groups within the Spitalfields area and identify key issues of concern regarding community participation in regeneration.
- To make recommendations, in terms of community involvement, for the continued regeneration of Spitalfields and for urban regeneration in general.

1.3 Research Methodology

1.3.1 Primary Sources

A total of 11 interviews, lasting from 25 minutes to 1 hour, were conducted with a wide range of individuals including a local authority planner, local councillors, the principle developers, local business and pressure groups, a conservation group, and representatives of the local MP (see Appendix A). Importantly, many of those interviewed lived and worked in the area and had first-hand knowledge of the issues that were raised through the research.

Interviews were semi-structured, and based on frames of reference familiar to participants. Interviews were recorded and later transcribed for further analysis (see Appendix B for example).

1.3.2 Secondary Sources

Academic journals and books, novels, national and local newspapers, community group newsletters, local authority publications, and regeneration initiative brochures were used to generate additional information on urban regeneration and public participation. Information on government policy was principally sourced from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

1.4 Structure

The literature review in chapter 2 analyses the development of participation policy within planning and regeneration in the UK, considers the justifications for public participation and examines the use and meaning of the term 'community'.

Chapter 3 provides two case studies of public participation issues in regeneration. Covent Garden highlights the problems arising from poor involvement of the local community while Elephant & Castle provides an example of a community involvement initiative that set a precedent for future urban regeneration projects.

Chapter 4 gives a detailed examination of the regeneration of the Spitalfields area of East London. An historical background and analysis of the current socio-economic dynamics of the area is followed by an examination of the regeneration that has been undertaken thus far. The chapter also explores the opinions of a wide variety of stakeholders on community participation in their local area.

Chapter 5 draws conclusions from the research and provides both location specific and generic lessons and recommendations.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to clarify the definition of the term community, summarise the key issues of community participation in terms of the political development of public participation and examine the justification for community participation in urban regeneration schemes.

2.2 The Concept of Community

The issue of defining 'community' is crucially important to the success of current participation legislation. Many policy documents refer to community e.g. Statements of Community Involvement, New Deal for Communities, and the Sustainable Communities Plan. Yet the meaning of the term is very seldom considered.

2.2.1 Defining Community

"The concept of community has been one of the most compelling and attractive themes in modern social science, and at the same time one of the most elusive to define" (Cohen, 1985 *in* Christensen and Levinson, 2003, p. 236).

For over 200 years the concept of community has been the subject of sociological debate and yet there is still a lack of satisfactory understanding of exactly what the term means (Bell and Newby, 1975). Hillary (1955 *in* Bell and Newby, 1975) identified 94 distinct definitions. Community can be described in terms of geographical area, social interaction, social ties and bonds in common. Communities can share attitudes, ideas, beliefs and identity (Christensen and Levinson, 2003).

"There is no single model or definition of community – communities are as diverse as their members or residents, which is one of their key strengths" (Fittall, 1999 *in* ODPM, 2003, p.12).

2.2.2 Community in the 21st Century

In recent times, there have been concerns about the breakdown of community. Many fear that globalisation is destroying local communities and that this is leading to increased social problems (Christensen and Levinson, 2003). Traditionally, to be a community, people have needed to be physically near one another. Today, however, many people find the strongest sense of community within groups that are not geographically based (Christensen and Levinson, 2003). The necessity to venture outdoors is reduced as we are served with satellite channels, and internet and email access bringing information and communication direct to our armchairs.

Urban policy today generally defines community in terms of a territorially delimited neighbourhood, within which there is deemed to be some sort of shared identity and set of values or as an identifiable ethnic group (Cochrane, 2003). The critical issue in terms of participation in regeneration is to ensure that the meaning of community is understood and that those communities to be involved in the improvement of a neighbourhood are identified from the start.

2.3 The Development of Public Participation in Planning and Urban Regeneration

Since its establishment following World War II, the planning system has been viewed as being primarily concerned with planning the physical shape and development of town and cities. Planners did not feel a need to consider public opinion:

“Your local planner needs not to be a sensitive ear listening to the townswomen’s guild or the chamber of commerce and this, that or the other. He needs to be a single-minded steam-roller” (Vice-Chairman of the Plymouth Planning Committee, 1963 *in* Broady, 1968, p.43).

2.3.1 1950 – 1969: The Early Years

Despite some changes to planning legislation during the late 1950s which obliged planners to make clearer the reasons for their decisions, public participation was not encouraged. The exhibition of maps and models, far from being an opportunity for

public discussion of principles and policy, was designed to impress and convince the public that what was being done was right (Broady, 1968). During the 1960s some communities began to openly protest against comprehensive housing schemes and motorways and strengthened the arguments for more public involvement in planning. Broady (1968, p.9) stated that “planning has to be thought not only as a matter of physical design and economic policy but also as a social process of an educational kind which seeks to encourage the contributions which people themselves can make to the improvement of their own social environment”. Therefore, it became clear that not only would the planning system gain from increased participation, but also individuals and community groups would benefit.

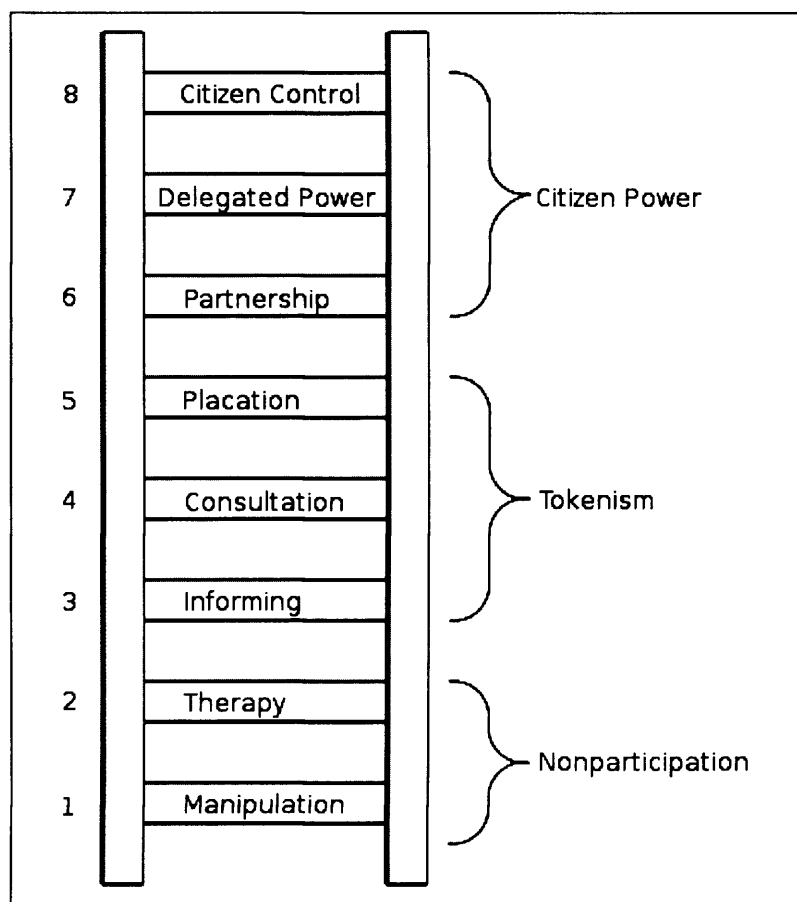


Figure 2.1 A Ladder of Citizen Participation
(Arnstein, 1969).

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1968 introduced public consultation as a statutory requirement for the first time (Department of the Environment, 1994). This was followed a year later by Sherry Arnstein’s highly influential paper, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” which influenced future changes in the way the public were involved in planning and regeneration (see Figure 2.1). According to Arnstein, true

participation could only be achieved when there was real citizen power to work in partnership to make decisions, yet in reality, much community participation at the time amounted to no more than 'tokenism' (Department of the Environment, 1994).

Influenced by academics, such as Arnstein, and growing pressure for greater participation within the planning system, the government commissioned the Committee on Public Participation in Planning – the Skeffington Report.

2.3.2 1969: The Skeffington Report

The 'People and Planning' paper of 1969 (the Skeffington Report) was the first major report on public participation in planning in the UK. Its aim was to "consider and report on the best methods...of securing participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area" (Committee on Public Participation in Planning, 1969, p.1). The report supported the concept of public participation:

"It matters to all of us that we should know that we can influence the shape of our community so that the towns and villages in which we live, work, learn, and relax may reflect our best aspirations" (Committee on Public Participation in Planning, 1969, p.3).

The report could be said to have been more a symbolic commitment to great public participation than a specific set of proposals: "...we would like our recommendations to be used as guidelines for constructive action, rather than as a deadening book of rules" (Committee on Public Participation in Planning, 1969, p.48). However, it was pioneering in the identification of the issues and its findings substantially influenced subsequent legislation in the early 1970s (Christensen, 1979). As such, it gave impetus to the rising tide of public interest in planning. Publicity and consultation became required components of the statutory planning system providing local people with opportunities to comment on and object to development plans and planning applications (Illsley, 2002).

2.3.3 1968 – 1979: Changes brought about by Labour policies

Following the establishment of the Urban Programme in 1968, the Labour government introduced a number of policy initiatives to tackle the growing concern for the inner urban areas. The Community Development Projects introduced in 1969, a series of Inner Area Studies in the early 1970s and the designation of Housing Action Areas by the 1974 Housing Act, provided the basis for the publication of the highly influential 1977 White Paper which marked a change in urban policy. The White Paper signalled a more broadly based approach to urban problems, combining economic, social and environmental programmes, and involving new organisational arrangements between central and local government to provide a more co-ordinated response to urban issues (Roberts, 2000).

2.3.4 1979 - 1997: Changes brought about by Conservative policies

Following the conservative election victory in 1979, there was a reduction in support for the Urban Programme and the planning system as a whole, with the government viewing participation as a barrier to effective planning and development. The Local Government, Planning and Land Act of 1980 replaced the requirement for consultation on matters to be included in plans with a requirement for participation only at draft plan stage (Barlow, 1995).

Inner city areas rapidly became testing grounds for the new 'enterprise culture'. Urban Development Corporations (UDCs), Enterprise Zones (EZs), the Urban Development Grant (UDG), City Action Teams, Garden Festivals and a myriad of other policy initiatives were administered through financial and regulatory powers (Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997). The impact of this was to open up decision-making to market influence and reduce local democracy in the development of inner city areas (Thornley, 1993). This property-led approach to urban regeneration is epitomised by the UDCs. They pursued land regeneration and property development in a highly entrepreneurial fashion with no serious requirement for an assessment of the social impact. The belief in the supremacy of the market and a discrediting of the public sector was the trademark of regeneration during the Thatcher years (Clark, 1994).

The implication of public dissatisfaction was apparent and strengthened government incentive to extend public involvement in the planning system. During the 1990s there was a move toward regeneration initiatives that included social as well as physical regeneration. Short time-scale, Area-Based Initiatives (ABIs) such as City Challenge and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) were intended to raise the sights of involvement. People were expected to “have a continuing say in the management, further development and implementation” of SRB and City Challenge projects (SRB Challenge Fund, 1995 *in* ODPM, 2003, p. 18). Despite this, City Challenge and the SRB had a poor reputation as bureaucratic, inflexible processes that often offered little for the community. Specialist language and complicated administrative systems hampered community involvement. Studies of the first round of SRB partnerships and the City Challenge, found that, although aiming to provide opportunities for residents to define and run their own projects, involvement of residents at the strategic level was limited (Taylor, 1998).

2.3.5 1997 – Present: Changes brought about by New Labour policies

The election of the Labour government in 1997 brought a renewed approach to regeneration and participation. They were concerned for social inclusion, wealth creation, sustainable development, urban governance, health and welfare, crime prevention, educational opportunity and freedom of movement (Lees, 2003). Significantly, SRB Round 5, the first round held under a New Labour government, introduced capacity building of the community sector as an obligatory output using up to 10% of the grant (ODPM, 2003). SRB money was to be used to actively foster social inclusion, develop genuine partnership working with a strengthened voice for the voluntary sector and local people, and take practical steps to encourage the full involvement of all the community, particularly ethnic minorities (Cochrane, 2003).

New Labour’s urban renewal policy provides a different approach to the short-life regeneration initiatives that had gone before. A more strategic local authority led approach emphasising the importance of partnerships between all stakeholders has been established (Duffy and Hutchinson, 1997; Hastings, 2003). Success in urban policy “depends on communities themselves having the power and taking the responsibility to make things better” (Tony Blair, 1998 *in* Wilks-Heeg, 2003, p. 210). The prominence of community in the political agenda represents an attempt to

reconstitute socially excluded communities, the spaces within which they live, and how they live their lives (Atkinson, 2003).

The Urban White Paper (UWP), published in 1999, envisioned “people shaping the future of the community, supported by strong and truly representative leaders” (ODPM, 2003, p.9):

“We know that an urban renaissance will not be achieved and sustained without the direct engagement of local people. So our policies will empower communities to determine their own future with support and co-ordinated action at the neighbourhood, local, regional and national levels” (DETR, 2000, p.6).

The UWP was followed by the Neighbourhood Renewal Action Plan, the New Deal for Communities (NDC), Community Strategies and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Although each of these policies emphasise the importance of involving communities in local decision making, there remains a weakness is how this is to be implemented in practice.

Following on from this, the Sustainable Communities Plan of 2003 also emphasised the importance of community participation in empowering local people. The plan puts community involvement as a principle high on the list. The question ‘what makes a sustainable community?’ is answered by twelve factors, the third of which is “effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in the planning, design and long term stewardship of their community” (Church and Elster, 2002 *in* ODPM, 2003, p. 33). However, the plan is unclear about how this is to be implemented. The community involvement theme appears to have the ‘high rhetoric, low specifics’ status which is familiar in much urban policy (ODPM, 2003).

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 primarily aims to create a more flexible and responsive planning system with a key objective to strengthen community involvement:

“Planning must work as a partnership and involve the community to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time. Planning affects everyone and all those involved in the system have a role to play in delivering effective and inclusive planning” (ODPM, 2004b, p.14).

The statutory requirement set out in the new Act for local authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) represents a key step in the government's target to fully engage people in the improvement of their communities. The SCI should show how the results of community involvement will feed into the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and other plans, and set out how the authority will learn from the experience and improve the arrangements where necessary (ODPM, 2004a). It will allow all stakeholders within the community to know when and how they are able to participate.

2.4 Justifications for Community Participation in Regeneration

For public agencies, community engagement is beneficial because it can assist in the identification of needs, inform policy-making at a local level and help target services in the most appropriate manner. It can also provide feedback on the effectiveness of service delivery and identify where greater co-ordination with other organisations and agencies is needed. For the community, involvement allows local people to identify their own needs and priorities, opens up decision-making processes to those normally excluded such as young people or ethnic minorities, helps to build community spirit and a sense of local ownership, encourages an acceptance of responsibility and empowers individuals and groups (Illsley, 2002). Community participation in regeneration furthers democratic values, achieves regeneration that is more attuned to the specific needs of different groups, and educates the public (Alterman, 1982). Furthermore, it increases communities' sense of empowerment:

“Residents are actively involved in the development process, there will be better maintained physical environment, greater public spirit, more user satisfaction and significant financial changes” (Becker, 1977 *in* Sanoff, 2000, p. 8).

Planning Policy Statement 12 (Local Development Frameworks) states four key benefits to community participation:

- Strengthening the evidence base for plans, strategies and planning decisions by providing a wide range of opinions and experiences;
- Community commitment to the future development of an area as local people are encouraged to make long-term improvements in their area;
- Promoting regeneration and investment allowing authorities to demonstrate their commitment to improving areas and facilitating joint working to achieve better quality outcomes;
- Fostering ownership and strengthening delivery through joint working between local planning authorities, local communities and stakeholders. Involving communities at an early stage helps resolve issues, thereby avoiding the need for lengthy independent examinations (ODPM, 2004a).

Community participation does not provide all the answers to the problems facing regeneration. However, working co-operatively can help to develop credibility and trust, lead to more flexible and creative responses to urban issues and provide a stable foundation on which to manage future change and uncertainty (Illsley, 2002).

2.5 Community Participation

In the past, the planning system was one of the very few policy arenas where there was a statutory requirement to involve the public and particular approaches and methods were developed within this framework. New Labour's modernising agenda and its concern with democratic renewal means that community engagement has become a key principle for policy makers across the public sector. New techniques are being pioneered and new institutional mechanisms are being created which will enable individuals to play a greater role in shaping the future of their lives (Illsley, 2002).

However, what is meant by participation? Community involvement occupies a unique but somewhat puzzling position in current social policy. It is a requirement accompanying virtually every policy regarding governance and public services, yet it is often vague or ambiguous in specific policy documents. Loudly trumpeted in

narrative, it is frequently absent from listed outputs, outcomes and budget categories. Clearly signalled as central in NDCs, Urban Renaissance, planning reform, health systems reform, community strategies, LSPs, and Neighbourhood Renewal, community involvement still largely lacks the kinds of concrete targets that give clear focus and direction to policies (ODPM, 2003). Government guidance if not prescriptive and it is not always clear how the requirement to involve community is, or should be, interpreted on the ground. Clear policy objectives for community involvement would be a major step forward in deepening democratic practice and forging a new kind of understanding between the state and citizens. It remains to be seen whether the new planning system will be able to meet satisfy this key issue.

2.6 Conclusions

The concept of community participation has progressed significantly since the birth of town planning and is now regarded as a key component of planning and regeneration. However, there is a growing demand to assess whether participation is successful in meeting its goals and whether the importance of participation in government legislation is being effectively implemented in practice.

The landscape within which planning and regeneration operate is changing. The new Planning Act aims to meet the challenges of delivering sustainable development, economic regeneration and environmental quality and central to this is community engagement and empowerment (Illsley, 2002). Successful urban regeneration cannot be built with public involvement in short bursts. The capacity for contributing to processes of change has to be built over time. This applies to both residents of individual regeneration areas and to civic leaders (Campbell and Cowan, 2002).

The position of voluntary and community groups within the new arrangement is ambiguous. They appear to be given a more central role, and their value is formally recognised through LSPs and the creation of SCIs. Nevertheless, there is justifiable scepticism about the extent to which excluded groups really will be given significant influence or involvement in the new arrangements. There remain justified concerns whether the concept of community participation will be delivered:

“While the government has committed itself to the principles of participation, there remains a significant gap between rhetoric and delivery” (Hugh Ellis *in* Planning, 2004).

The key to success is to build public confidence through demonstrating that communities, in particular socially and economically marginalised groups, really can actively participate in the regeneration of their areas, make a difference to the quality of their lives, and help create a more equitable and sustainable urban environment.

Chapter 3 Case Study Reviews

3.1 Introduction

As an example of the development of public participation in urban regeneration, this chapter will examine the case studies of Covent Garden (1960s/70s) and Elephant & Castle (1990s onwards). Covent Garden provides an early example of a community initially excluded from planning decisions. Elephant & Castle provides a more recent example of community participation in urban regeneration and highlights some of the potential difficulties of local involvement. Together, these case studies demonstrate the highly political nature of urban regeneration and the issues that arise through not involving the community from the outset.

3.2 Covent Garden

Prior to redevelopment, Covent Garden was a strong and stable community with 43% having lived in the area for more than 20 years (Christensen, 1979). The decision to move the Produce Market south of the Thames to Nine Elms in 1964 was made by central government and was based purely on financial decisions (McIntyre, 1976). The development of the area following the move of the market was then left in the hands of the local authorities.

The Covent Garden Consortium, composed of council members from the GLC, Camden and Westminster, was set up in 1965 to lead the new development and subsequently produced the first draft plan – *Covent Garden's Moving*. The plan proposed a giant network of roads which would be financed and infilled by large commercial hotels, offices and a conference centre (Cooper and O'Donovan, 1998). Although many 'obsolete' buildings were highlighted and more than 80% of existing housing was to be torn down, there was virtually no public consultation. The plan was driven by economic factors with little consideration of social impact, a common approach at the time and a clear indication that the development would primarily benefit the developers and not the local community (McIntyre, 1976).

The consortium's recommendations were then referred to the GLC for a decision. As with the decision to move the market, there was virtually no public consultation

regarding the plans for redevelopment and the GLC appeared uninterested in the views of local people:

“Their views and aspirations were of no consequence to us; they owned no buildings, no land and had no power” (Anson, 1981, p.28).

With the emergence of local interest the planners used public relations techniques to communicate their ideas. In spite of surveys, individual and group consultations and public exhibitions, engagement with local people was unsuccessful because of the highly technical way in which information was presented (Christensen, 1979). Anger and resistance from the local community quickly grew.

In 1971 an 18 month public enquiry highlighted the social impact of the development. As a result the Secretary of State ruled against the GLC proposals and listed over 200 buildings which effectively ruled out the prospect of the wholesale redevelopment of the area (Cooper and O'Donovan, 1998). The inquiry demonstrated that the council's attempt at participation had only been aimed at the powerful landowners and property companies. Encouraged by the Skeffington Report and growing public pressure, community participation was sanctioned in the renewed planning for the area, the beginning of a more sensitive approach to the regeneration of historic inner city areas.

X

Despite the existence of the Covent Garden Community Association (CGCA), a well respected local campaign group, the GLA created the highly bureaucratic Covent Garden Forum of Representatives (CGFR) to provide local representation. Despite providing the primary mechanism for public comment on the revised plan and reviewing planning policy and planning applications, the forum had no real power (Christensen, 1979). The developers and local authorities were not obliged to accept its recommendations and the forum was heavily dependent on planners who were able to manipulate the weak organisation. The CGCA eventually withdrew from the forum frustrated at their inability to influence decisions. Major community protests and rallies were held. Many recognised that the CGCA were more representative of local opinion and more able to work with the GLC:

“The forum has proved to be what many people predicted – a bureaucratic body tied to GLC decision-making procedures, rather than a positive political body...Camden Council continues to recognise the CGCA as the body that most represents local opinion...” (Covent Garden Independent News, 1975 *in* Anson, 1981, p. 241).

By 1976, the GLC had adopted a different approach to regeneration in an attempt to appease local residents – a revolutionary shift from the 1968 plan. Its main objective was now to safeguard and increase the residential population. The CGCA continued to press for improvements to the Covent Garden plan, eventually creating their own plan – *Keep the Elephants out of the Garden* (Anson, 1981). Indeed, the success of the community campaign was demonstrated when the CGCA’s plan was largely adopted:

“...The [GLC’s new] plan is virtually identical to the one put forward by the residents, occupants’ associations and the CGCA. It represents a firm rejection of the plan put forward by the GLC only last June... The local alternative now accepted by the GLC means less demolition, less disruption, more rehabilitation at less cost...(CGCA, 1976 *in* Anson, 1981, p.245).

It is clear that the campaign of groups such as the CGCA saved Covent Garden despite the lack of community participation by the GLC. These events helped turn the tide of post-war planning in the UK towards a more sensitive approach to historic centres and paved the way for improvements in community participation in regeneration.

3.3 Elephant & Castle

Elephant & Castle, located in the London Borough of Southwark, is an area of extreme deprivation with all wards within the 10% most deprived in England and Wales. In 1999 Southwark Council launched a large-scale regeneration project. The council decided that the core elements of the regeneration infrastructure would be a public-private partnership to redevelop the site of the shopping centre and nearby housing estates, and a £25 million, seven-year SRB application to run parallel to the

physical redevelopment which would provide major improvements in housing, schools, streets and businesses, and increase community empowerment (Loney, 2002). The council claimed it would be “a demonstration project of government thinking on social exclusion” (Southwark Council *in* North, 2003, p.126).

The consultation process for the SRB included working groups and a Stakeholders’ Forum of key local public, voluntary sector and private sector partners. The main themes of the bid were developed by the council and were presented to the Stakeholders’ Forum late in the day, without consultation with the subgroups. The council argued that bottom-up, community-focused projects would not be appropriate for a strategic programme, suggesting that a community-led programme would be limited by the Government funding to £2-3 million, while a strategic programme could generate up to £25 million (North, 2003).

Once the bid had been approved, a Community Forum was established to act as a voice for local people, eventually growing into a federation of 63 local residents’ groups, faith groups, black and minority ethnic groups, and small community-based groups (Parkes, 2004). Very quickly, however, the Forum realised it would need to fight for adequate administrative support if a real local voice was to be heard alongside the better resourced private and public sectors. A community office was opened in the shopping centre, which became the focus for the community (North, 2003).

The community were *consulted* throughout the process of selecting the developer, but the *ultimate decision* lay with the council (Loney, 2002). The consultation did not amount to shared power and decision-making. The community group did not have access to its own technical support, in what were becoming critical decisions about the fundamental redevelopment of the area by property interests. The Forum therefore successfully argued for a radical tripartite management structure formed from the community, the Council, and the developer, and for significant levels of independent technical support (North, 2003). Elephant Links Community Forum (ELCF) was set up to represent the local community on the board. The Development Team Executive (DET), a collection of technical experts working on behalf of the community forum to represent and report back to the community, was also

established in an attempt to match the range of high level consultancy services available to the Council and the developer (Parkes, 2004).

Unfortunately, the tripartite format soon encountered difficulties. The ELCF believed that the council was not allowing the community to properly participate in the regeneration process. The Council, however, argued that the community was attempting to takeover the process, perhaps to prevent regeneration taking place and that it was unrealistic to expect an organisation such as ELCF to manage a complex redevelopment (North, 2003).

The outcome was perhaps predictable. The Council took control over what had become, for it, an unmanageable process. The ELCF's funding was suspended and the DET, originally intended to be the community's voice during the regeneration, moved back to Council management (Parkes, 2004). In April 2002, the Council terminated the agreement with the developer, and sought partners for a smaller programme involving one partner for the shopping centre and a new housing-based development involving a consortium of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), something the community had fought against from the start (North, 2003).

The tripartite approach to urban regeneration was intended to be a model of partnership working, but two years of internal wrangling resulted in an acrimonious split between the developers, the Council and the community (Loney, 2002). The regeneration work at Elephant & Castle is set to continue following the publication of the 'Elephant & Castle Development Framework' in 2004. However, the innovative tripartite method has now been abandoned in favour of more traditional consultation techniques by the council-developer partnership.

3.4 Observations and Lessons

Both case studies demonstrate the difficulties inherent in community participation in planning and urban regeneration projects and a number of context specific and generic conclusions can thus be made.

3.4.1 Context Specific Lessons

As Wilcox (1994) argues, every situation is unique. Many of the lessons from Covent Garden and Elephant & Castle are dependent on their geographical, political, and historical context. The regeneration of Covent Garden took place before community participation was regarded as a crucial component to the success of urban regeneration projects. Indeed, the outcome of Covent Garden helped shape the nature of the participation we see today. Furthermore, the needs of different communities and their ability to get involved in the regeneration process vary dramatically. Differences between communities, indeed differences within the same community, have a major impact on the approach of regeneration initiatives (ODPM, 2003).

The issue of exploitation in regeneration is also highlighted. At Covent Garden the establishment and funding of the CGFR by the council, and the limited control that the forum had demonstrates that 'he who pays the piper calls the tune' (LPAC, 1995). Indeed, the specific needs of communities need to be identified and addressed as a key objective of any regeneration scheme. At both Elephant & Castle (housing management issues) and Covent Garden (the relocation of the market and development of largescale commercial development at the expense of housing and community facilities), national needs continually took precedent^{ce} over the desires of the local community. The principal objective of any inner city regeneration initiative needs to be for the benefit of local communities.

3.4.2 Generic Lessons

The above case studies highlight a number of lessons that can be applied to all regeneration projects. Firstly, and most importantly, there is often a mismatch between the rhetoric that puts the community at the heart of regeneration and reality (North, 2003). Despite government policy supporting community participation, in reality effective participation does not always occur.

It is essential that Community involvement is instigated at the very start of any regeneration project. As both Covent Garden and Elephant & Castle have demonstrated, introducing the community at a later date inevitably slows the process

and, in the case of Elephant & Castle, can ultimately lead to failure. Furthermore, participatory roles and responsibilities must be identified early in the proceedings. Regeneration is always regressively redistributive – the rich benefits at the expense of the poor (McIntyre, 1976). Yet with real community involvement from the outset, communities are more likely to appreciate the gains to the local environment.

An additional critical success factor lies in the strength of communities. In both case studies, it is clear that the unity and strength of the community played an important part in generating the demand for participation. This is crucially important in all urban regeneration projects. Without the desire of local people to get involved, and therefore to strengthen the process, regeneration will be at the discretion of those with power. However, the impact of community strength can lead to different outcomes. In Covent Garden, the strength of the community, in particularly the CGCA, was the critical factor in saving the market. By contrast, at Elephant & Castle it is clear that the strength of the community forum and the inability of the tripartite partners to work together ultimately led to the failure of the original regeneration project.

No matter how strong the community's resolve, without adequate resources they will never be able to compete against the financial strength of council departments or private development firms. The CGCA was burdened with debt to the point that the organisation had to rely on donations and loans to be able to challenge the plans in court. Similarly, the ELCF was eventually closed down when the council withdrew funding. Without adequate financial support, community participation is unlikely to succeed (ODPM, 2003).

Wilcox (1994) highlights the importance of actively helping people to participate. This is a critical issue in all regeneration initiatives. Otherwise, local participation may not be truly representative. In both case studies, the community voice came to be dominated by an elite few. At Covent Garden, while the CGCA started out as a working-class organisation to fight the case of local residents, it soon became dominated by a select group of middle-class residents who were better able to understand the planning system and defend their neighbourhood. At Elephant & Castle, the ELCF was also dominated by a select group of individuals. To be truly representative the key issue here is helping to involve those who do not understand

the process especially in areas dominated by ethnic minorities where language and cultural barrier may limit participation. In a 1999 study of Merseyside, officials regarded the community as having a significant influence on a huge regeneration scheme whilst 75% of residents did not even know the scheme existed (ODPM, 2003). From this example, it is clear that a loud community voice does not necessarily equate to true representation.

It is also important that planners communicate effectively using the language of the layman, to ensure that the system is ~~as~~ accessible to all (LPAC, 1995) and are genuine in their desire to work towards true community participation.

3.5 Conclusions

Covent Garden and Elephant & Castle provide good examples of the problems relating to community participation in urban regeneration. The issues that have been raised in this chapter are crucially important to the success of any regeneration initiative and attempts should be made to make regeneration a more socially inclusive system. The justifications for community involvement are clear, but the way to ensure effective engagement is less clear.

The lessons from Covent Garden, Elephant & Castle, and other regeneration schemes can be used in future regeneration projects. The ultimate goal should be a system in which all people are able to get actively involved in the regeneration of their area. The planning system should plan *with* people rather than *for* people.

Chapter 4 Spitalfields

4.1 Introduction and Background

This chapter explores the regeneration of Spitalfields in East London and examines the previous and current regeneration projects. It also seeks the views of a variety of different stakeholder groups involved in the changes to the area.

4.1.1 Reasons for Selection

Spitalfields provides the perfect case study for examining community participation in urban regeneration. Since the late 1980s, Spitalfields has been subject to many regeneration projects and has therefore experienced the implications of the changes in urban policy described in Chapter 2.

Its location on the western edge of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on the boundary of the City of London (see Figure 4.1) also presents an interesting illustration of the social and economic tensions that can arise through inner city regeneration. Spitalfields is an area of traditionally high levels of socio-economic deprivation and the juxtaposition between the richest and poorest of Britain's inner city areas has created a number of issues for the regeneration of Spitalfields.

Spitalfields' provides an excellent case study for community participation. Over the past two decades, Spitalfields has demonstrated levels of community strength and resistance that many other deprived inner city areas have failed to reach. Despite a historically changeable ethnic community, there has always been strong local resistance to much of the regeneration in the area. Today's population is principally dominated by a large Bengali community, but there are a wide variety of ethnic groups, who generally interact well with each other.

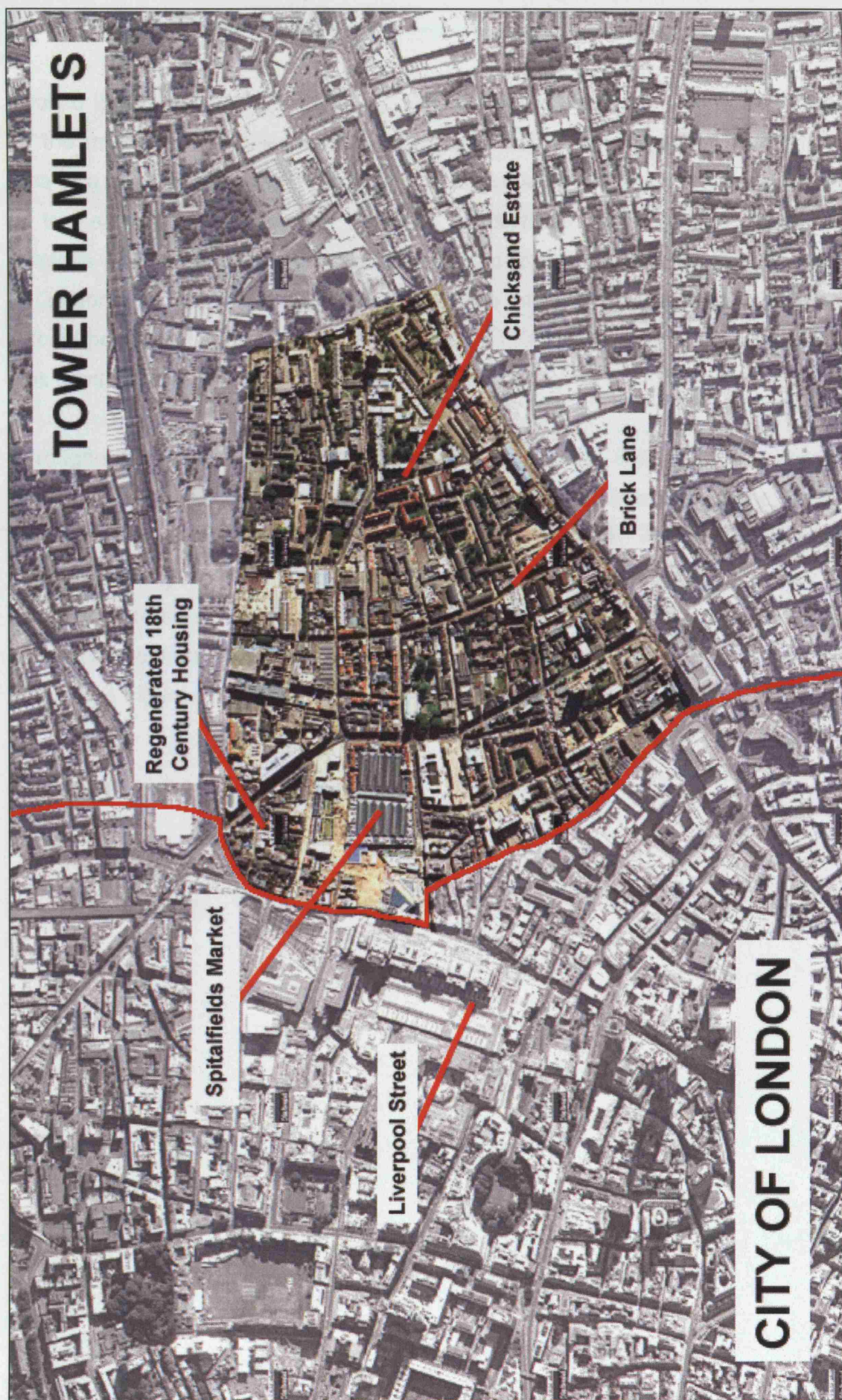


Figure 4.1 Location of 'Spitalfields and Banglatown' ward

4.1.2 Historic Background

Prior to the mid-seventeenth century, Spitalfields was still relatively rural. However, by the mid-seventeenth century the area was sufficiently populated to prompt the idea of a market. This was despite the continued apprehensions of the Government at the eastward expansion of London, “occasioned partly by the political and religious disaffection existing in such outskirts of the capital as Spitalfields” (Survey of London, Vol. XXVII in SDG, 2001, p. 14). The market flourished and soon became a focal point for the Spitalfields community. In 1684 the market which stands today was developed.

date!

Throughout its history Spitalfields has been a first port of call for various immigrant groups, providing a place of refuge. Indeed, the area takes its name from the hospital founded there in 1197. However, the area has also acted as a step on the ladder for many of these immigrant groups who have moved out once they have established themselves. Therefore, within Spitalfields can be found the influences of a variety of different cultures that have passed through the area over the past 500 years (see Figure 4.2).

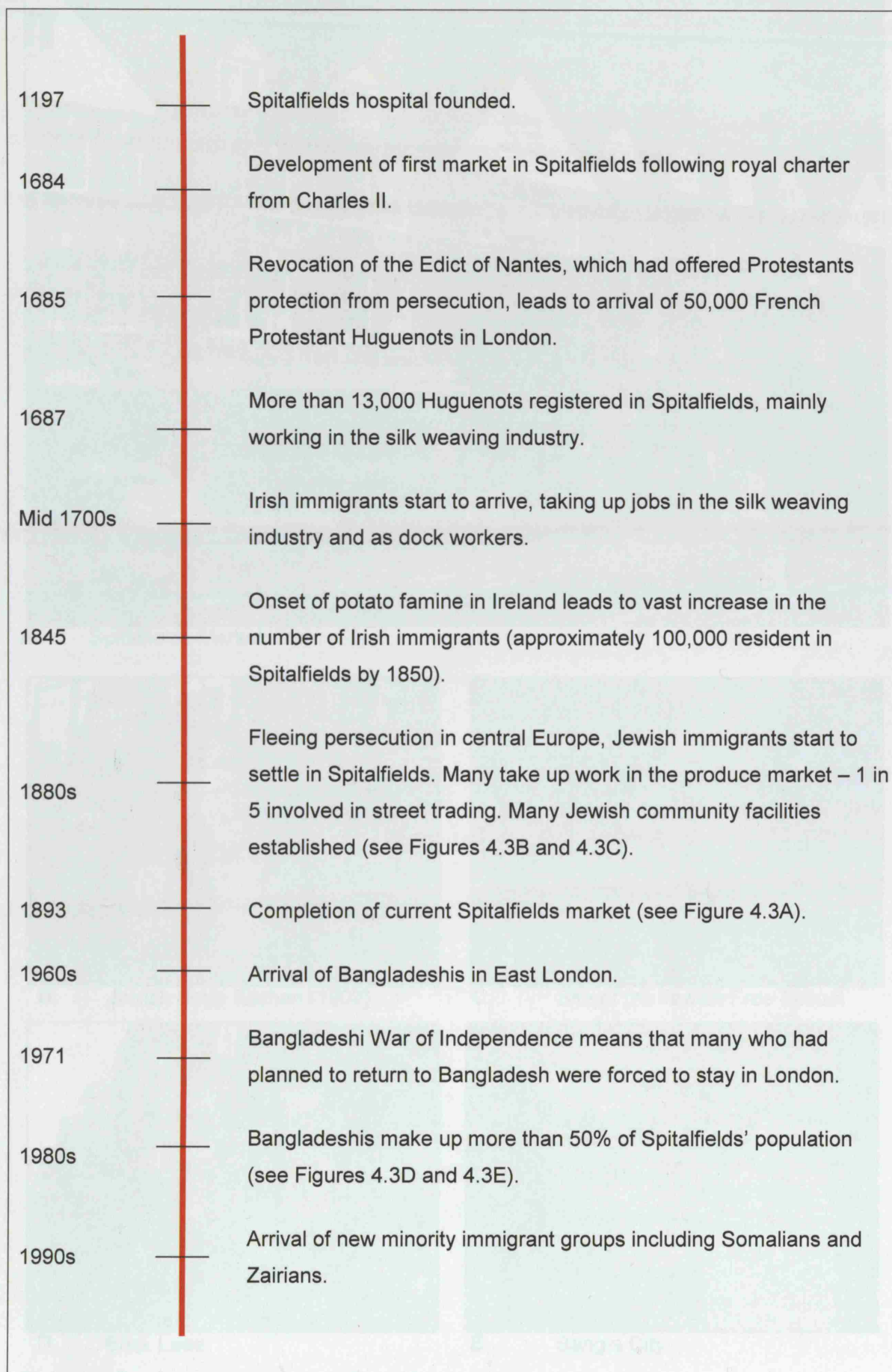


Figure 4.2 Historical timeline for Spitalfields



A. Spitalfields Market



B. Jewish Soup Kitchen (1902)



C. Site of the Jewish Free School



D. Brick Lane



E. Bangla City

Figure 4.3 Historic images of Spitalfields

4.1.3 Socio-Economic Background

The ward of Spitalfields and Banglatown (Spitalfields) is located in the west of Tower Hamlets and has a population of 8,383 (National Statistics, 2001). Tower Hamlets is the 4th most deprived local authority in England and Wales and has high levels of deprivation spread evenly across the whole borough (National Statistics, 2001). Spitalfields is the 6th most deprived ward in Tower Hamlets and ranks 639th out of 32,483 for England (Tower Hamlets Council, 2004a).



Figure 4.4 The proximity of Spitalfields and the City

A critical factor in regeneration issues was its close proximity to the wealthiest local authority in the UK – the City of London (see Figure 4.4). Ranked as the 88th least deprived in England and Wales, the City of London is the antithesis of Tower Hamlets and Spitalfields. With a GDP of £20.5 billion and a current workforce of about 270,000 people, it represents the heart of London's World City status (SDG, 2001).

The ethnic diversity of Spitalfields sharply contrasts that of adjoining wards in the City. Nearly 60% of Spitalfields' population is Bengali in origin, making it the highest concentration of this ethnic group in England. By contrast, Bishopsgate ward in the City has a predominantly white British population (60%) and no Bangladeshi population (see Figure 4.5). Spitalfields' ethnic diversity is emphasised by the 43 different languages spoken within the ward (Gareth Harris, interview, 13/06/05).

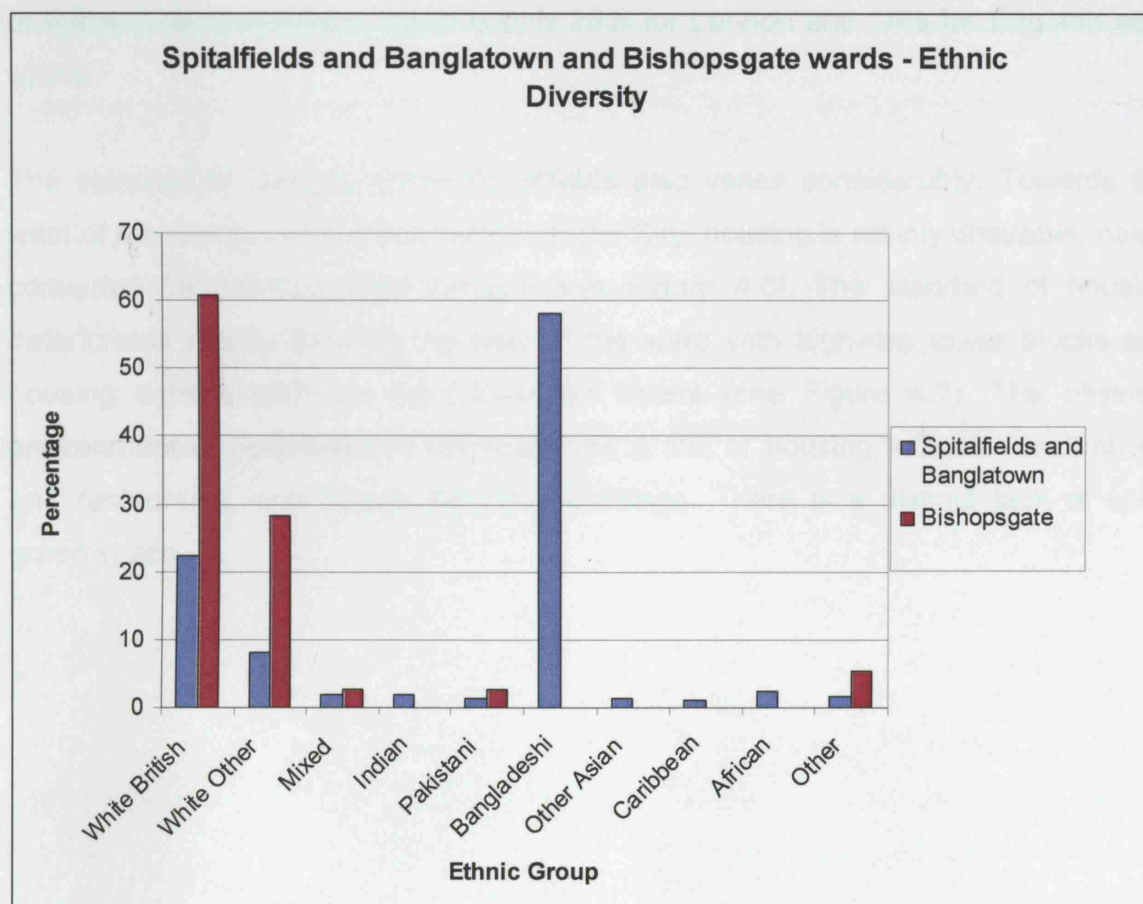


Figure 4.5 Ethnic make-up of 'Spitalfields and Banglatown' and Bishopsgate wards (National Statistics, 2001).

Educational attainment in Spitalfields is low. 35% percent of people have no qualifications compared with 24% for London and 29% for England. By contrast, within Bishopsgate, this figure is only 9%. Similarly, only 30% of residents in Spitalfields have education to degree level, while in Bishopsgate, this figure is 50% and rises to 60% for the City of London as a whole. This poor educational level has a knock-on effect in terms of employment with Tower Hamlets having the 2nd highest level of unemployment in London (Tower Hamlets, 1998). Furthermore, the average income of the majority of residents is estimated to be in the region of £12,000 - £15,000 and much of the local economy is based on small family-run businesses (Spitalfields Community Association, 2005a).

Housing is another key issue for the residents of Spitalfields. Only 37% of people own their home compared with 56% for London and 68% for England. Nearly 50% of Spitalfields residents live in properties owned by the Council, Housing Associations or RSLs. The comparable figure is only 26% for London and 19% for England as a whole.

The standard of housing within Spitalfields also varies considerably. Towards the west of the ward, near the boundary with the City, housing is mainly desirable, newly converted 18th century town houses (see Figure 4.6). The standard of housing deteriorates rapidly towards the east of the ward with high-rise tower blocks and housing estates such as the Chicksand Estate (see Figure 4.7). The physical environment of Spitalfields is dominated by a mix of housing, offices, small shops and restaurants, and former industrial buildings. There is a distinct lack of open green space.



Figure 4.6 Regenerated 18th Century Town houses in the west Of Spitalfields.



Figure 4.7 The Chicksand estate in the east of Spitalfields.

4.2 Regeneration to Date

During the past 20 years, Spitalfields has experienced a number of regeneration initiatives and has witnessed the changes in regeneration policy highlighted in Chapter 2.

4.2.1 Bethnal Green City Challenge (1992-1997)

Bethnal Green was one of nine deprived city areas selected for the City Challenge initiative designed to encourage area-focused regeneration through private and public partnerships (SDG, 2001). The City Challenge initiative provided £37.5 million delivered through a cross sector partnership with the private sector playing the leading role, mainly focused on the Spitalfields area. Bethnal Green City Challenge was set up as a limited company, with a partnership board of 25 directors,

representing all interests in the area. The company also set up a series of advisory groups within its structures to ensure that a wide constituency would be able to be involved in and influence company decision-making (Bethnal Green City Challenge, 1997).

To underpin the physical and economic improvements, a community development programme was created to work with local groups and residents. A number of small-scale community projects, such as playground improvements and local environmental initiatives, were successful in involving the community. City Challenge also aimed to provide education and training for local residents and improve job opportunities, particularly for those from ethnic minorities. In total, over £6 million was invested in education and training.

Housing was a major issue for City Challenge. In the 1970s, 75% of all housing in Tower Hamlets was owned by the council, the highest percentage of social housing in London. Tower Hamlets struggled to maintain housing on such a large scale and so investment was low, leaving many residents in appalling conditions. Over 5 years, City Challenge spent more than £11 million on public housing refurbishing over 1,500 homes and building 495 new ones, many designed to meet the requirements of the Bengali community for larger family homes (SDG, 2001). Additionally, some £50 million was invested in private housing (Bethnal Green City Challenge, 1997).

During its five-year life, City Challenge attracted £139 million from the private sector into the area, matched by £24 million of public sector investment. Over 3,000 jobs and 259 new businesses were created and more than 76,000m² of business floor space was improved (SDG, 2001). Over 300 buildings were refurbished, 116 community facilities were improved, and nearly 6,500 people received qualifications (Bethnal Green City Challenge, 1997).

However, despite the figures, many in the local community felt that City Challenge was ultimately a failure:

“So, money, about £35 million, was pumped in here. But the benefit was not that much for the local people. People were not very much involved in it...” (Councillor Mortuza, interview, 13.06.05).

"We'd all battered away at them trying to get them to listen. But I think what we were seeing was this quick-fix mentality, because they knew they had to be in and out in five years" (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05).

4.2.2 Cityside Regeneration (1997-2004)

Following City Challenge, Cityside Regeneration Ltd (Cityside) managed the Single Regeneration Budget Round 3 programme "Building Business" (1997-2002) and Round 5 programme "Connecting Communities" (1999-2004) (City of London, 2005). Its aim was "to help individuals and communities in the west of Tower Hamlets to be economically, socially and culturally prosperous...by driving sustainable development and breaking down barriers to development, through the creation of new opportunities by public, private and community partnerships" (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004, p. 20).

Cityside's focus was on breaking the barriers and stereotypes that prevent local people accessing employment in the City, offering support to existing and new businesses, and developing the area as a visitor destination. It also worked to increase the capacity of local communities, enabling residents to direct and manage the regeneration. More than 1,400 local residents gained employment as a result of Cityside's work. Partners such as Skillsmatch and Tower Hamlets College delivered training and job support, and many employment opportunities were created through Cityside's funding of small community projects (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004).

Cityside worked to secure the active engagement and participation of the local community. At one level this saw community representatives on the Cityside Board and its programme management boards. Indeed, the majority of community representatives interviewed had been directly involved in the running of Cityside. Even more important, however, was the extent to which Cityside worked with, and developed, local community groups to act as delivery bodies for projects. This ensured community confidence and maximum participation in the programme. Good examples of this can be found in the form of the Bangladeshi Youth Movement, Elite Youth, Sydney Community Project, and the Somalian Education and Cultural Project.

More than 6,000 young people benefited from these projects and Cityside claim that this would not have been possible without the active involvement of the voluntary and community sectors. In some areas Local Area Boards, comprised entirely of local community and voluntary sector organisations, were formed to enable around 200 community leaders to be part of key decisions (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004).

In 1997, the lack of affordable workspace was a key issue affecting the local economy. Rising property values and conversion of warehouses into luxury residential accommodation resulted in a lack of workspace for small businesses. Early consultation was crucial:

“When we started we carried out an initial consultation process, asking members of the local small business community how they’d like us to spend money in the area... The answers we got often surprised us, which shows the importance of the consultation process. Some of the schemes that emerged were ones we’d never have thought of doing ourselves” (Andrew Bramidge, Director of Cityside Regeneration Ltd, *in* SDG, 2001, p.62).

With increases in property prices and rent, this situation was unlikely to change once Cityside had finished its work. The establishment of long-term affordable space has ensured the long-term, lasting benefits that City Challenge failed to achieve. The creation of the Business Development Centre (see Figure 4.8), where the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project (EMEP) was established in 1999, is one prime example. EMEP offers business support and training to an ever increasing range of individuals and companies and secured funding so that Cityside’s work could continue (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004). Over its 7 year lifespan, Cityside created more than 13,000 square metres of new business space, most of which will continue to be managed on a not-for-profit basis keeping rents affordable. By creating organisations like EMEP, Cityside effectively handed over responsibility for ongoing improvements to local people and sought to look beyond its 7 year remit (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004).



Figure 4.8 The Business Development Centre

The general feeling is that Cityside achieved far more for the local community than City Challenge, despite budget differences. The principle reason for this was the active involvement of local people:

“...Cityside Regeneration, with their modest budget of £11.4 million, they have done a lot...done a *lot* actually compared to the budgets they had, because they had the community involvement” (Mahmoud Rauf, interview, 22.06.05).

4.3 Current Community Participation in Urban Regeneration in Spitalfields

Much has changed since the arrival of New Labour. The mistakes of earlier short-term regeneration initiatives such as City Challenge have been realised and a more strategic approach to regeneration, with local authorities in a leading role, has emerged. As the local democratically elected body, it is appropriate that Tower Hamlets Council takes the lead in ensuring that the needs and aspirations of the community are identified and that planning for future development is socially inclusive. The objective of the borough's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is to "regenerate the borough, to stimulate growth and facilitate the long term physical, social and economic development of the borough, *foremost for the benefit of local residents and businesses...*" (Tower Hamlets Council, 1998, p.12, emphasis added). In order to achieve this goal, the Council is "committed to genuine partnership with local communities, including those with special needs. Encouragement will be given to the active participation by local communities in the planning, design, implementation and management of new development and services" (Tower Hamlets Council, 1998, p.27).

A wide range of mechanisms and networks are used to involve users and other stakeholders in these processes. A weekly newspaper, EastEnd Life, is sent to every household in the Borough highlighting local issues and encouraging local people to get involved. A Residents Panel, which is a representative sample of the Borough's population, has proved particularly valuable for one-off consultation work finding out what residents think about particular issues. However, more strategic than these has been the establishment of the Tower Hamlets Partnership.

4.3.1 The Tower Hamlets Partnership

The establishment of the Tower Hamlets Partnership (THP) in November 2001 marks a significant step forward on community involvement in the regeneration of Spitalfields and Tower Hamlets more generally. The THP brings together all key stakeholders and will be the driving force for the continued regeneration of the area (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004). By working with local residents, the Council, police, the health service, public services, voluntary and community groups, faith communities and businesses, its aim is to give all stakeholders a much stronger say

in the way that the area develops. The THP also has responsibility for delivering the NRS and Community Plan, targeting resources where most needed, and promoting co-operation amongst stakeholders. Above all, it gives local people a stronger voice in the development of their communities. The THP now forms the centrepiece of the Council's continued regeneration of Spitalfields. Within this, there are a number of significant strategies for involving local people in the process.

4.3.2 The Local Area Partnerships

The LAPs lie at the heart of the THP and are perhaps the most important mechanism for community involvement. The THP states that they "provide a new way of working and engaging with the community, giving a stronger voice to local people in identifying priorities and influencing the delivery of local services" (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2002a, p.1). Eight LAPs were established in January 2002, with LAP 2 covering the wards of Spitalfields and Banglatown and Bethnal Green South. They provide the key body for participation and consultation in planning and regeneration and will be the driving force for the continued regeneration of Spitalfields (Cityside Regeneration Ltd, 2004). While LAPs cannot bid for Neighbourhood Renewal regeneration money, they are designed to influence how this money is spent.

LAPs are open to everyone living in or having a stake in the area. They operate as partnerships, with a brief that extends beyond forums or formal meetings. Each LAP must operate within the guiding principles of the THP as a whole and be proactive in providing opportunities for everyone to get involved (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2002a). This strategy is relatively new and it is therefore difficult to assess the LAPs' long-term impact on involving the community in regeneration. However, among local people there is some concern that the LAP responsible for Spitalfields may not achieve its objective of involving local people:

"They want residents to get involved in the Local Area Partnership to say what is important, what is useful... So you go to the LAP meetings and you get about 10 people attending. You're lucky if you get one local resident... Its very strongly top-down and local authority led."
(Bodrul Islam, interview, 29.06.05).

A recent seminar by the Brick Lane Business Association felt that residents' involvement in LAP 2 has been ineffective (Brick Lane Business Association, 2005). Indeed, while the THP states that "it is essential that residents have their say in all aspects of the Community Plan and are involved in how it is put into action" (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2002b, p. 5), an analysis of the recent Steering Group meetings of LAP 2 reveals very low levels of residents attendance (see Figure 4.9). It is felt by some that LAPs are dominated by Councillors and that the community has not been equipped with the appropriate tools to effectively participate. Furthermore, what is agreed in LAP meetings is then often overturned at CPAG meetings, leading to a lack of local ownership and, consequently, low participation:

"If you go the LAPs, you're asked to contribute to the strategy...but the actual decision making process is far removed from the people. So you have at least three tiers of decision making... For example...if we sit in a LAP meeting and think next year for us the biggest issue is to improve this green space behind that block, we may say it's our priority...but the PMG may sit there and decide that the priority is unemployed young people. And I think that is the mismatch that needs to be resolved. Until that is done, it is a model that is destined for failure" (Bodrul Islam, interview, 29.06.05).

Date	Total Attendance	Resident Attendance*
22 nd March 2005	14	1
9 th February 2005	9	3
10 th January 2005	14	1
7 th December 2004	19	3
30 th November 2004	13	1
7 th October 2004	16	0
6 th September 2004	15	0
20 th May 2004	13	2
4 th March 2004	13	1
22 nd January 2004	12	2

Figure 4.9 LAP 2 Steering Group Attendance for 2004/2005 (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2005).

* Residents attending not on behalf of specific group/organisation.

4.3.3 The Community Plan

The Community Plan was launched in 2001 and sets out Tower Hamlets' targets until 2010. It describes the kind of place that people who live and work in the Borough want. The Plan aims to be more than just a document. Rather, the THP feels that it should be a *process* – “a process through which we all work together to deliver real change on the ground” (Tower Hamlets Council, 2005a, p.50). The intention of the Plan is to actively involve local communities in the development and regeneration of their neighbourhoods:

“The Community Plan belongs to the community. Everyone – residents, voluntary and community organisations, and businesses, as well as the Council and other public services – has a part to play in making sure that we achieve the real improvements in the quality of life that local people deserve” (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2004b, p.1).

The THP claims that community involvement has played a central role in the development of the Plan. The Plan has been developed by the THP through joint working with the LAPs and the Community Plan Action Groups (CPAGs) and through substantial consultation. The CPAGs are accountable to local people, via the LAPs and the Partnership Management Group (PMG), to ensure that the promises set out in the Community Plan are delivered. In order to carry out their role, CPAGs are required to hold a minimum of four public meetings each year and organise at least one public conference for each major issue per year (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2004a). The Community Plan is reviewed and updated yearly by the CPAGs, in partnership with the LAPs and PMG, to ensure that development requirements driven by the London Plan and private sector developers support the needs of the local community (Tower Hamlets Council, 2005b).

The THP recognises that engagement of local people will not happen unless residents feel that their views are genuinely heard and where possible, acted on (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2004a). The use of extensive written documents, questionnaires and public meetings alone is unlikely to encourage people to get involved, particularly those from ethnic minority groups who may be impaired by

cultural or language difficulties. Instead, the Plan highlights the multi-lingual East End Life newspaper, newsletters, leaflets, posters and exhibitions to inform people of local issues. More important, the THP believes, is engaging people in informal settings – supermarkets, pensioners' clubs, youth clubs, schools, parents' centres, festivals and other Borough events (Tower Hamlets Council, 2004c).

However, there is concern about the levels of real community involvement in the Community Plan. Bodrul Islam, Chief Executive of EMEP claimed that the Council still dominated proceedings:

“The Community Plan, the partnership, is supposed to be led by people from the community, not by the Council. But at this moment, it is completely led by the Council. Everything is done by the Council. The community has very little say. The Brick Lane Business Association have commissioned a seminar only three months ago. And here is about 100 leading people of Town Hamlets, all races – black, white, Indian, Bangladeshi, Somalian. And at that seminar there were three workshops. And these workshops gave full verdict of how they think the Community Plan is handled and how the community partnership is handled. And it's a *damn* criticism by the people...”
(Mahmoud Rauf, interview, 22.06.05).

4.3.4 Local Area Action Plans

The Local Area Action Plans provide just one example of the way in which residents within Spitalfields are able to contribute to solutions to local issues. They are being developed for each LAP area in Tower Hamlets and highlight three key priorities, identified through extensive negotiation between the CPAGs and LAPs. They are linked to the Community Plan priorities, together with some of the actions that will be taken to deliver those priorities and some of the outcomes that people in the area should expect (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2004b). The Action Plans must reflect the contribution that the local community can make to improvement in the neighbourhoods. Therefore, LAPs must be able to sign up to initiatives that will encourage people to get involved such as local self-help and voluntary schemes, or awareness raising campaigns to target hard-to-reach groups in the locality.

The key needs identified in Spitalfields (LAP 2) are to improve services and facilities across the LAP particularly for young people, to improve community involvement and engagement in the area, and to improve the quality of the local environment (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2004b). In terms of improving community involvement, the Action Plan for Spitalfields identifies the LAP as the suitable “mechanism for consultation on planning and development issues affecting the northwest of the borough, including new building and transport projects” (Tower Hamlets Council, 2004c, p.5). The draft Action Plan for LAP 2 also highlights the need to build on the projects and legacy left by City Challenge and Cityside.

4.3.5 The Tower Hamlets Compact

Under the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Tower Hamlets Council is required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that sets out the council’s policy for involving communities in the preparation and revision of local development documents and considering planning applications. This SCI, known as the Tower Hamlets Compact, will then form part of the new Local Development Framework (Tower Hamlets Council, 2005c). The vision for Tower Hamlets’ Compact is “to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the borough” (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2004b)

The Compact will reinforce the Council’s aims that:

- Consultation and involvement processes will be co-ordinated
- Clear information will be provided
- Consultation and involvement processes will have an adequate time-scale
- The purpose of each consultation and involvement process will be set out
- A variety of methods will be used
- Accurate records of responses will be kept
- A summary of consultation and involvement findings will be made public
- Participants will be given feedback about the outcomes of consultation
- Where appropriate, local third sector organisations will be supported in delivering or contributing to the delivery of consultation and involvement
- Consultation and involvement processes will be reviewed and monitored
- Training and guidance will be provided to those undertaking consultation and involvement (Tower Hamlets Council, 2005a).

Tower Hamlets is presently in the process of creating the SCI, with extensive consultation currently being undertaken, and therefore any full assessment of its success at involving local people is difficult. However, the consultation process itself is indicative of how local people can expect to be involved in the work of the council and the THP. During the course of this research it became clear that many people in the community had either never heard of the Tower Hamlets Compact or had not been involved in the consultation processes.

4.3.6 Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

Over the next three years, Tower Hamlets is being allocated £23.9 million from the government's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to tackle the long-term deprivation affecting much of the borough. In partnership with the THP, the Council has developed the borough's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS).

The THP claims that there has been "unprecedented community involvement in the development of this strategy" and that they have moved "beyond consultation to active ownership" (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2002b, p.9). Furthermore, the NRS is to be delivered through the workings of the THP, thereby involving communities in the strategy's delivery. The success of the Tower Hamlets NRS in continuing the regeneration of areas like Spitalfields will depend on the ability of the THP to sustain and broaden community involvement over the life of the strategy and beyond. This will only happen if local people believe that their views are listened to and acted upon. The THP proudly declares that through the NRS they are "building the capacity of the community to shape its own future" (Tower Hamlets Partnership, 2002b, p.9). However, as has been demonstrated in the above discussion of the LAPs, community contribution levels are currently low and without improvements in this, real participation and empowerment is unlikely to be achieved. Furthermore, community groups within Spitalfields maintain that despite community involvement, the NRS remains firmly in the control of the Council:

"If you go to the current Neighbourhood Renewal it's very very strongly top-down and local authority led. It's the public authorities so it's the council, it's the housing authority, it's the NHS. Between those three is

the Neighbourhood Renewal programme... Neighbourhood Renewal in a failure" (Bodrul Islam, interview, 29.06.05).

4.4 Critical Review of Public Participation in the Regeneration of Spitalfields

This chapter has highlighted the range of regeneration initiatives within Spitalfields, from the short time scale projects of City Challenge and Cityside to the more strategic approach in action today. The achievements of these different approaches is extensive, with each successive regeneration project producing long lists of the numbers of people entering employment or the quantity of new homes being built. However, for the purposes of this research, it is important to examine the levels of community involvement in these processes and how local people have felt about the regeneration of Spitalfields. Alterman (1982) claims that it is extremely difficult to impartially evaluate the outcomes of public participation as what is considered a success by one group is bound to be regarded as a mockery, manipulation, or 'politics' by another group. However, through indepth interviews across a wide range of groups within Spitalfields, it has been possible to draw general conclusions.

4.4.1 The Developers

The principle developers behind much of the regeneration of Spitalfields has been the Spitalfields Development Group (SDG). They have played the leading role in both City Challenge and Cityside and continue to work with the Council. Their Chief Executive, Mike Bear, was extremely proud of the efforts they had made to involve the community in their work:

"We've had public exhibitions, where we've invited people and had dialogue with them, had arguments with them, we've been on the radio station with them. So, you know we've really had an 'open door' policy. And we've had lots of events where we've invited people here to see what we're doing. So, because we're slightly unusual because we've been here so long, we know who the most important people to consult with are and I think we've got it probably as right as you ever do" (Mike Bear, interview, 13.06.05).

When pressed for specific examples, Mike Bear highlighted the participation that had taken place for the development of open public space, something which has been highlighted regularly as a key need for the local community:

“One of the showcases of consultation in a physical sense is Bishops Square. We basically had a series of workshops where we got all of the local people who were interested to see what they would like to see in the square, *their* square, *our* square. We gave them cameras and got them to go around London to take photographs of the sort of spaces and the use of space that they’d like to see. And in fact, I think...they just put the trees in last weekend so you’ll see that its starting to show how *they* would like to see it, but it has to of course work for us as well” (Mike Bear, interview, 31.05.05).

4.4.2 The Community

The opinions of local communities are mixed and difficult to generalise. With such a diverse community and a multitude of different community and voluntary organisations, it is clear that a general consensus for “the community” is impossible to achieve. Indeed, as Gareth Harris of the Spitalfields Trust stated, “we have so many differing needs here that it’s impossible to satisfy everyone” (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05). Some people felt that throughout the regeneration of Spitalfields community consultation and participation has been extensive:

“There are times when I though I’ve been consulted to death! You could literally, in the last 25 years, have made a full-time job being consulted by regeneration agencies in Spitalfields (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05).

However, the general picture appears to be one of dissatisfaction over the way the local communities have been involved and disagreement with the positive picture painted by the likes of SDG, City Challenge and Cityside:

“Generally I think people have been slightly unsure of the whole idea of regeneration, largely because there’s been a lack of consultation and accountability.” (Asad Rahman, interview, 07.06.05).

A key example of local resentment is the ‘Connecting Finance with Communities’ conference in 2001, which aimed to examine the role of the financial services sector and business in building strong neighbourhoods on the city fringe. Many local people felt that the Corporation of London was seeking to impose a one-sided corporate-led regeneration on the Spitalfields community. Jil Cove, the chair of the Spitalfields Community Association (SCA) claimed that the organisers were actually alienating local communities from the consultation process:

"It's outrageous that the City has the audacity to hold a conference and claims to be linking financial bodies to local community groups when the tickets are priced around £200-£400 per person. How many community members are they hoping to attract at that price? The conference claims to be stimulating debate about a helpful economic regeneration of the East End, but the list of speakers attending from leading financial institutions, completely excludes representatives from community groups. We have clearly not been invited" (Jil Cove, Chair of SCA in Crystal Palace Campaign, 2005).

While friendly disagreement over ways forward within an overall framework of agreement about a certain regeneration strategy is permissible, fundamental critics are not seen as ‘good partners’ and can lead to certain groups being excluded from the consultation process (North, 2003). This is evident in Mike Bear’s opinion of SMUT:

“The trouble with SMUT is that they’re a single focus group. They have one agenda. Their agenda is not jobs for Bangladeshis, its *anti* what we’re doing here, *anti*-redevelopment of the Spitalfields Market... I don’t discount their sincerity because they are people who have devoted an awful lot of their own time to fighting a cause, but some of them have kind of lost track of history – the battle of Spitalfields took place in the 70s and 80s. That’s when it was decided...We still talk to

SMUT but I think that we're at a stage now where the outcome has almost been decided in spite of them (Mike Bear, Chairman of SDG, interview 31.05.05).

With the dominance of the Bengali community in Spitalfields, targeted involvement of ethnic groups is essential to the success of any participation exercises. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation claims that ethnic groups have not been adequately involved in planning and implementing renewal programmes and the renewal policy often ignores the diversity and difference within neighbourhoods (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000a). A critical factor in the exclusion of ethnic groups has been language and cultural barriers to participation:

"Crossrail is a perfect example. Crossrail says "we consult with the local community". One of its exercises in consulting with the local community, knowing that this is first or second generation Bangladeshi and Somali community, where language is *the key* to accessing any services, they produced leaflets in English which said "if you cannot read this leaflet and you require a translation, please contact this number and the translation will be made available to you". They didn't do bilingual leaflets which anyone living in the area would say that if you actually wanted *genuinely* to have consultation, that's what you would do" (Asad Rahman, interview, 07.06.05).

However, other people within the Bengali community felt that lingual and cultural differences are no longer valid reasons why ethnic minorities are not involved:

"Language is not a barrier to involvement. Its now second generation and so language is not a barrier. Some of the older generation may have problems, but generally it's not an issue" (Aziz Chowdhury, interview, 28.06.05).

"All inner city communities are well up to scratch on what is going on. No doubt about it. In my opinion, they are well able to actively participate" (Michael Parkes, interview, 04.02.05).

Indeed, Spitalfields has demonstrated levels of community strength comparable to that of Covent Garden in the 1970s. The long running SMUT campaign saw a petition of over 40,000 signatures fighting to save the market from demolition. Similarly, Gareth Harris described occasions when the local community felt come out in force to fight their case:

“At one meeting to do with Banglatown three hundred people couldn’t get *into* the meeting. And it had to be stopped. I’ve never seen anything like the fury turned on the councillor who was trying to hold the meeting. At the one that followed that, the husband of the councillor chairing the meeting got beaten up. It was *truly truly* remarkable to see how passionate people were” (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05).

Gareth Harris went on to describe how he felt that certain groups within Spitalfields will never be satisfied with the way in which they are involved in the regeneration process:

“What always happens is the minute you don’t get what you want, then everybody starts “oh, we weren’t consulted about that” (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05).

“There are groups in Spitalfields who are very good at playing the “feel sorry for me” card when actually they may not be doing too badly in some respects. Obviously if you’re going to attract funding to your various community organisations, you’re not going to get it by saying “things aren’t actually too bad” (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05).

However, most people that were interviewed within the community agreed that they were sometimes sceptical about the legitimacy of the participation that takes place:

“So, when there is a question of planning gain money, the consultation doesn’t come, does it?” (Mahmoud Rauf, interview, 22.06.05).

“I think we’re all fairly cynical. We often think that by the time consultation actually goes out, a decision has been made somewhere behind closed doors, that this is actually, can we bend people around to it?” (Gareth Harris, interview, 13.06.05).

4.4.3 The Local Planning Authority

As the local planning authority, Tower Hamlets Council is responsible for the overall regeneration of Spitalfields and oversees the establishment and management of current mechanisms for community involvement. Of particular pride to the Council has been the THP. Since its launch, the THP has identified that community leadership needs to be strengthened so that “all local communities benefit from the major development planned for the area” (Tower Hamlets Council, 2004b, p.50). The Council feels that the current mechanisms for involvement, created through the new planning system, have increased the sense of priority around community engagement. The Council believes that front-loading of community involvement is fruitful for both itself and the local community, and through mechanisms such as the SCI and the THP, it is felt that more people will be able to be genuinely involved in the regeneration of Spitalfields.

The Council also recognises the importance of the diversity of population in Tower Hamlets, emphasising the multi-cultural nature of Spitalfields throughout the UDP. Jamie Ounan, strategy officer for the Tower Hamlets planning department, maintains that ethnic diversity is “Spitalfields’ strength and will continue to be so long into the future” (Jamie Ounan, interview, 21.07.05). However, when questioned whether ethnic minorities are equally represented in consultation exercises, he replied “there is still more work to be done”. Indeed, the Brick Lane Business Association (2005) feels that small grass roots organisations continue to feel that their views are being ignored despite the work of the Council. At present, Tower Hamlets’ UDP does not include distinct and separate policies for the needs of different groups. Instead, it is intended that an understanding of the needs of people with disabilities, the elderly or racial minorities, should run through the implementation of every policy (Tower Hamlets Council, 1998). Questions need to be asked about this approach given Tower Hamlets’, and more specifically Spitalfields’, multicultural make-up.

The Council is keen to stress the importance of capacity building through the regeneration process and believes that residents must be actively involved as they “live with the results” (Jamie Ounan, interview, 21.07.05). Regeneration is a complex process and a balance always needs to be reached between the desires of the community, the economic demands of development, and the structure of the planning system. The Council believes that participation in regeneration not only helps local communities express their desires, but facilitates capacity building of residents. Despite these admirable beliefs, there remain many in the community who are sceptical about the tokenistic representation often offered by the Council (Brick Lane Business Association, 2005).

4.5 Conclusions

The regeneration of Spitalfields has been a long process, influenced by a wide range of regeneration strategies. In general it appears that most people in Spitalfields are in favour of the changes that have taken place, but doubts remain about the way in which decisions are made. There is widespread belief from ethnic minority and grass roots organisations that consultation has often been tokenistic or even non-existent. Much of this stems back to the work of City Challenge that failed to involve local people effectively. However, public opinion on the success of Cityside demonstrates how critical community participation is to successful urban regeneration.

Following a change in the government’s approach, the regeneration of Spitalfields has become a more strategic process. With the local authority now taking a leading role in regeneration, it is hoped by many that community involvement will become a more integral part of the process. Indeed, the creation of the THP, the Community Compact and the LAPs has established the mechanisms that should allow all members of the community to get involved at the start of future regeneration initiatives. However, as many of those interviewed have suggested, there remain some critical issues that need to be resolved before the regeneration of Spitalfields can be described as truly inclusive and empowering.

Chapter 5 Conclusions: the Lessons Learned

5.1 Introduction

The regeneration of Spitalfields has been a long process illustrating the dramatic variations in regeneration policy that have taken place over the past 20 years. Through the examination of the changes at Spitalfields, the lessons learned from the literature review and the case studies of Covent Garden and Elephant & Castle, a number of context specific and generic lessons can be learned. This chapter concludes by making key recommendations for the continued regeneration of Spitalfields and other regeneration schemes.

5.2 Context Specific Lessons

The significant changes in approach to urban regeneration, identified in Chapter 4, have left their mark on Spitalfields. The failure to involve local people was a key factor in the lack of success of the City Challenge initiative. The Cityside initiative that followed offered people more hope. Today, Spitalfields is subject to a new, more strategic, approach to urban regeneration and it is to be hoped that this approach will learn lessons from previous mistakes. To be effective it is essential that planners and developers learn how to involve local people in meaningful ways. Tower Hamlets council is very vocal in its support for local communities, particularly ethnic minority groups such as the Bengalis and the newly arriving Somalians.

Regeneration in any location is a balancing act of meeting the needs of different stakeholders and Spitalfields' location on the edge of the City places an even greater strain on the regeneration. The growing pressure caused by the outward expansion of the City has led to some locals feeling that the regeneration is aimed more at the businesses of the City than the local communities of Spitalfields. Providing opportunities for local people to gain from the expansion of the City is no easy task but it is critical that local people are involved in the decision making process to ensure that they gain from the developments. It is critically important that local communities are permitted to make influential regeneration decisions as they understand "the local circumstances *far* better than some officer from an increasingly hierarchical series of public bodies" (Michael Parkes, interview, 04.02.05).

5.3 Generic Lessons

The past 40 years has seen significant progress in the involvement of local communities in the regeneration of their neighbourhoods. Taken together, the cases of Covent Garden, Elephant & Castle, and Spitalfields demonstrate how participation has evolved to become a fundamental part of solving inner city problems.

The introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act is another significant step. One of the key aims of the new act is to simplify the planning system and make it more accessible to the general public. Indeed, the government strategies aimed at involving communities in regeneration, highlighted in chapters 2 and 4, are a welcome improvement on previous government approaches to solving inner city problems. The plethora of schemes is, however, causing confusion in many communities and 'consultation fatigue' is becoming a major issue (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000b), as evidenced by the low turnout at LAP2 public meetings in Spitalfields (see Figure 4.9) and the lack of knowledge, among those interviewed, of the creation of the Tower Hamlets Compact. Greater coherence in the current patchwork of overlapping initiatives is essential:

"Despite the government's intention that LSPs will rationalise and co-ordinate activity at a local level, LSPs remain just one amongst many partnerships and structures which the [voluntary] sector must engage with" (Mackie, 2002 *in* ODPM, 2003, p.45).

Barriers to participation linger and must be overcome. The technical complexity of regeneration can often put people off participating and the current changes in the planning system are confusing to many people, at least in the short-term. Furthermore, the issue of involving ethnic minority and small community groups is particularly important. For regeneration to succeed in any area, people need to be able to participate at their own levels of interest and expertise. For too long has the system been set up to benefit those with the loudest voice and the largest resources. Communities must receive more support and training to develop the skills and resources required to participate effectively.

5.4 Key Recommendations and Conclusions

A number of key recommendations for the continued regeneration of Spitalfields have become clear during this research.

Ethnic minority and grass roots organisations need to be provided with greater opportunities for involvement. The ethnic diversity and history of Spitalfields needs to be regarded as a strength to be built upon. While language and cultural barriers appear to no longer exist in the second generation of immigrants in Spitalfields, there remains a strong local feeling that certain groups receive less attention than others. Greater involvement of minority groups in regeneration is essential if differences in priority between groups are to be taken into account.

The regeneration of Elephant & Castle demonstrates the potential for adopting a tri-partite approach to urban regeneration. With the Council, developers and community obliged to form a genuine partnership, all stakeholders would be properly involved. This obligation would help move beyond the problems of rhetoric versus reality that has plagued the participation agenda for so long. However, such an approach may fail in an area as large and diverse as Spitalfields. The tri-partite approach can be very successful at a small-scale level, but where the “financial, political, strategic stakes are high, a partnership approach of this kind, is notoriously difficult to achieve” (Parkes, 2004, p194).

The creation of the THP, the LAPs, and the Tower Hamlets Compact provide the perfect opportunity for increased involvement in the continued regeneration of the area and highlight the firm commitment to community participation provided by the government. Indeed, the range of opportunities provided for Spitalfields residents appears impressive.

At present these participation mechanisms are not working to their full potential. Levels of involvement remain low and there remain concerns that Tower Hamlets' approach is overwhelmingly top-down rather than bottom-up. The key to success lies in the proper engagement of all groups of the Spitalfields community, in particular ethnic minority groups, and a commitment from the Council to ensure that future

partnerships offer genuine rather than tokenistic involvement. The creation of the Tower Hamlets Compact will hopefully ensure that this happens.

For too long has community participation in urban regeneration been little more than government rhetoric. The new planning system, coupled with strong and determined local authorities such as Tower Hamlets, offers an unprecedented opportunity to create a more equal playing field that allows communities to play a genuine part in the regeneration of their neighbourhoods. The opportunity must not be missed.

References

Alterman, R. (1982) *Planning for Public Participation: The design of implementable strategies*, Environment and Planning B, **9**: 295-313.

Anson, B. (1981) *I'll Fight For You!: Behind the Struggle for Covent Garden*, Jonathan Cape, London.

Arnstein, S. (1969) *A Ladder of Citizen Participation*, Journal of the American Institute of Planners, **35**: 216-224.

Atkinson, R. (2003) *Addressing urban social exclusion through community involvement in regeneration*, in Imrie, R. & Raco, M. (Eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 101-119.

Barlow, J. (1995) *Public Participation in Urban Development: The European Experience*, PSI Publishing, London.

Bell, C. & Newby, H. (1975) *Community Studies: an introduction to the sociology of the local community*, George Allen and Unwin, London.

Bethnal Green City Challenge (1997) *The Bethnal Green City Challenge: 1992-1997*, Bethnal Green City Challenge, London.

Brick Lane Business Association (2005) *Report of BLBA Seminar on Neighbourhood Renewal in Tower Hamlets*, Brick Lane Business Association, London.

Broady, M. (1968) *Planning for People*, Bedford Square Press, London.

Campbell, K. & Cowan, R. (2002) *Re:urbanism*, Urban Exchange, London.

Christensen, T. (1979) *Neighbourhood Survival*, Prism Press, Dorchester.

Christensen, K. & Levinson, D. (Eds) (2003) *Encyclopaedia of Community: from the village to the virtual world*, Volume 1, Sage, London.

City of London (2005) *Urban Regeneration Projects*,
http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/urban_regeneration/previous_projects.htm

Cityside Regeneration Ltd (2004) *Cityside Regeneration: 1997-2004*, Cityside Regeneration, London.

Clark, G. (1994) *Where's the toolkit?* Rising East: The Journal of East London Studies, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 55-72.

Cochrane, A. (2003) *The new urban policy: towards empowerment or incorporation? The practice of urban policy*, in Imrie, R. & Raco, M. (Eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 85-100.

Committee on Public Participation in Planning (1969) *People and Planning: Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning*, Chaired by Mr. A. M. Skeffington MP, HMSO, London.

Cooper, R. & O'Donovan, T. (1998) *Covent Garden: A Model for Protection of Special Character*, Journal of Planning and Environment Law, December 1998, pp. 1110-1120.

Crystal Palace Campaign (2005) *Crystal Palace Campaign*,
<http://www.crystal.dircon.co.uk/>

Department of the Environment (1994) *Community Involvement in Planning and Development Processes*, HMSO, London.

DETR (2000) *Our Towns and Cities: The Future*, White Paper, DETR, London.

Duffy, K. & Hutchinson, J. (1997) *Urban Policy and the Turn to Community*, Town Planning Review, **68** (3): 347-362.

Forman, C. (1989) *Spitalfields: A Battle for Land*, Hilary Shipman, London.

Hastings, A. (2003) *Strategic, multilevel neighbourhood regeneration: an outward-looking approach at last?*, in Imrie, R. & Raco, M. (Eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 85-100.

Illsley, B. (2002) *Planning with Communities*, A good practice guide for the RTPI, October 2002, RTPI, London.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000a) *Ethnic Diversity, Neighbourhoods and Housing*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York,
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/foundations/110.asp>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2000b) *Array of neighbourhood initiatives causes confusion and 'consultation fatigue'*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York,
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/pressroom/releases/010300.asp>

Lees, I. (2003) *Visions of 'urban renaissance': the Urban Task Force report and the Urban White Paper*, in Imrie, R. & Raco, M. (Eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 61-82.

Loney, N. (2002) *Irreconcilable Differences*, Planning Magazine, 21st June 2002.

LPAC (1995) *Good Practice Guide to Community Planning and Development*, December 1995, LPAC, London.

McIntyre, T. (1976) *Covent Garden: Grand Planning to Muddling Along*, Architectural Design **46** (3): 144-148.

National Statistics (2001) *National Statistics Online*, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/>

North, P. (2003) *Communities at the Heart? Community action and urban policy in the UK*, in Imrie, R. & Raco, M. (Eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*, The Policy Press, London, pp. 121-138.

ODPM (2003) *Searching for Solid Foundations: Community Involvement and Urban Policy*, ODPM, London.

ODPM (2004a) *Creating Local Development Frameworks: A Companion guide to PPS12*, ODPM, London.

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_032593.pdf

ODPM (2004b) *Consultation Paper on Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities*, ODPM, London.

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_027494.pdf

Parkes, M. (2004) *Community Participation and Urban Regeneration in London: King's Cross and the "Elephant and Castle"*, in Paloscia, R. (Ed) (2004) *The Contested Metropolis: Six Cities at the Beginning of the 21st Century*, Birkhauser, Basel, pp. 191-196.

Planning (2004) *Participation comes under fire*, Planning Magazine, 19th November 2004, Issue 1596.

Roberts, P. (2000) *The Evolution, Definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration*, in Roberts, P. & Sykes, H. (Eds) (2000) *Urban Regeneration: A Handbook*, Sage, London, pp. 9-36.

Sanoff, H. (2000) *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.

SDG (2001) *New Heart for an Old Soul: Spitalfields Revitalised*, SDG, London.

Spitalfields Community Association (2005a) *Briefing Document from Spitalfields Community Association*, May 2005.

Taylor, M. (1998) *Achieving Community Participation: the Experience of Resident Involvement in Regeneration in the UK*, in Warburton, D. (Ed) (1998) *Community & Sustainable Development: Participation in the Future*, Earthscan, London, pp.161-181.

Thornley, A. (1993) *Urban Planning Under Thatcherism: the challenge of the market*, Routledge, London.

Tower Hamlets Council (1998) *Adopted Unitary Development Plan*, Tower Hamlets Council, London.

Tower Hamlets Council (2004a) *Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004: A Summary for Tower Hamlets*, <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/discover/data/borough-profile/downloads/IMD2004Summary.pdf>

Tower Hamlets Council (2004b) *The Community Plan to 2010: Year 4, 2004-2005*, Tower Hamlets Council, London.

Tower Hamlets Council (2004c) *Local Area Action Plans: Draft March 2004*, Tower Hamlets Council, London.

Tower Hamlets Council (2005a) *Local Development Framework: Local Development Scheme – Adopted May 2005*, Tower Hamlets Council, London.

Tower Hamlets Council (2005b) Tower Hamlets Website, <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/>

Tower Hamlets Council (2005d) *Local Development Framework: Statement of Community Involvement – Consultation Draft*, Tower Hamlets Council, London.

Tower Hamlets Partnership (2002a) *Local Area Partnerships – Guidance on the Role of the 'Action' or 'Steering' Group*, Tower Hamlets Partnership, London.

Tower Hamlets Partnership (2002b) *A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in Tower Hamlets: 2002-2010*, Tower Hamlets Partnership, London.

Tower Hamlets Partnership (2004a) *Working Together: Improving Tomorrow, Shaping Today*, Tower Hamlets Partnership, London.

Tower Hamlets Partnership (2004b) *The Tower Hamlets Compact*, Tower Hamlets Partnership, London.

Tower Hamlets Partnership (2005) *The Tower Hamlets Partnership: A New Way of Working*, <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/data/thp/channels/thp/web/index.html>

Wilcox, D. (1994) *The Guide to Effective Participation*, Partnership Books, Brighton.

Wilks-Heeg, S. (2003) *Economy, equity or empowerment? New Labour, communities and urban policy evaluation*, in Imrie, R. & Raco, M. (Eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 205-220.

Wilson, M. & Wilde, P. (2003) *Benchmarking Community Participation: Developing and implementing the Active Partners benchmarks*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York.

APPENDIX A Interviews

Date	Interviewee	Position	Location	Duration	Recorded
4 th Feb	Michael Parkes	Community Planner (worked in area at early stages of regeneration)	Bartlett School of Planning	45 mins	Yes
31 st May	Mike Bear	Chief Executive of SDG	SDG Office, Brushfield Street	40 mins	Yes
7 th June	Asad Rahman	Researcher for George Galloway MP (Respect Party)	Portcullis House, Westminster	1 hour	Yes
13 th June	Councillor Muhammed Hulam Mortuza	Tower Hamlets Councillor (Spitalfields & Banglatown Ward)	Tower Hamlets Parents Centre, Spelman Street	25 mins	Yes
13 th June	Gareth Harris	Spitalfields Trust	Spitalfields Trust Offices, 18 Folgate Street	1 hour	Yes
22 nd June	Mahmoud Rauf	Brick Lane Business Association	Brick Lane Business Association, 6 Heneage Street	30 mins	Yes
28 th June	Aziz Chowdhury	Bethnal Green Training Centre and Spitalfields Small Business Association	Bethnal Green Training Centre, Hanbury Street,	30 mins	Yes
29 th June	Bodrul Islam	Chief Executive of EMEP	The Business Development Centre, Greatorex Street	45 mins	Yes
5 th July	Jemima Broadridge	Former member of SMUT and member of Spitalfields Community Association (SCA)	The Golden Heart, Commercial Street (SCA meeting)	30 mins	No
21 st July	Jamie Ounan	Tower Hamlets Strategy Officer (previously a Regeneration Project Manager)	Email interview	-	-

APPENDIX B Transcript of Interview

Interview with Mahmoud Rauf (Brick Lane Business Association)

Date: 22nd June 2005

Time: 11:00

Location: 6 Heneage Street, E1

Duration: 30 minutes

AB: ...OK, so I'm looking into the regeneration of Spitalfields and primarily looking into how the local community have been affected by the changes and also how they have been consulted or participated in the regeneration process. So could you start by telling me a bit about the Brick Lane Business Association, what you do and how you were formed?

MR: The Brick Lane Business Association formed in 1995 just to serve the interests of the local businesses because at that time, this area was such a badly affected by neglect of the authorities. The council neglected the area. As a result of that, the whole area was rubbish...damp... The police neglected the area. As a result of that there was mugging in the broad daylight, cars breaking into in the broad daylight. There were others hurt and everything. So as a result of that, the customers of...well, those who come into this area, were avoiding this area...not to come in this area. All the businesses were suffering. So, ten years ago, in 1995, all the business people who were fed up, they just decided to do something about it because they had to make the authority listen to them. So, they got together and formed this association to campaign to get the area in a better shape. Regeneration is one of our main intentions, cleanliness, a brighter area, prosperity and of course...secure. These are the main things we started our organisation for and we started to campaign! And we didn't...6 months – things beginning to change. And our campaign made, well helped to make Brick Lane the area it is now. So, this is the background, in a small way, of Brick Lane Business Association. We are the trade union of businesses you can call it. We do not have any funding. We do not have any staff. We are the volunteers working for the improvement of the area...promoting the area.

AB: So it was set up originally as a campaign group?

MR: It was a pressure group and *still* it is a pressure group.

AB: And you received no funding to set it up?

MR: Not to set up...but subsequently we...there was no BME, Black and Ethnic Minority Organisations, getting any funding at the time or the business organisation getting funding, there were no organisations...so to save their face, the authority asked us to get some funding so that they can save their face and say "yes, we are..."...a known BME organisation is getting funding. So we have got a small grant of 40,000 or something. And it was project sort of funding...to do this, to do that, do seminars...I'd say about 40,000...its not a big deal.

AB: Right. And that was provided by the council?

MR: No, it was provided by Cityside Regeneration.

AB: OK, that's something I'd like to ask you about. How much was the Brick Lane Business Association involved in initiatives like City Challenge, Cityside Regeneration and the City Fringe Partnership?

MR: We do not have any involvement with City Fringe. But City Challenge, before Cityside Regeneration, City Challenge...the latest stage of City Challenge when they were starting a lot of things, we became involved with that because we were formed in 1995. They were just...well, they asked our help to help this area. And we led the Banglatown initiative. The Banglatown initiative we did...another vehicle of regenerating the whole area. So I was the chair of Banglatown consultative forum. And that is the only involvement with City Challenge. And after City Challenge, the Cityside Regeneration came about and I, the chair of Brick Lane Business Association, was appointed a director of Cityside Regeneration. I was a director of Cityside Regeneration. And Cityside Regeneration actually it was only a regeneration organisation with a fund of £11.4 million. They have done much to this area. City Challenge with £37 million budget, a lot of people think it was mostly wasted. The 37 million didn't do anything for this area. It was wasted. But, Cityside Regeneration with their modest budget of £11.4 million, they have done a lot...done

a *lot* actually compared to the budgets they had, because they had the community involvement. And with...Cityside has bought the RichMix Centre. Do you know the RichMix Centre? RichMix Centre is the most biggest achievement – I think £3.5 million we spent on that to buy the place. Now government is spending another £11 million I think to refurbish and re-do the whole thing to make it as new. And another achievement was Cityside is the Whitechapel Centre. They bought the Whitechapel Centre *for* the community. And being a small and modest budget holder they have achieved a lot and helped to establish an organisation called the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project and I was the founder of that organisation. I initiated it...because... my argument was that there was no ethnic minority business support agencies in this area, and this area is full of ethnic minority people and full of ethnic minority businesses, there is a need to help these ethnic minority specialised organisations...to help them, so that they can contribute to the economy of the country. And, directors of the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project, Cityside have given about £200-250,000 initial grant *plus* European and all these things that EMEP has started. And I was the founder and still am the chair of EMEP and it is doing for the ethnic minority business formation in the area because ethnic minority businesses are part of the mainstream businesses...if ethnic minority businesses are not promoted then a part of your whole mainstream business are a state behind untouched. So this is what I thought...the mainstream economy will be benefited if ethnic minority businesses are promoted.

AB: OK. In terms of City Challenge and Cityside, which you've had experience in, how do you feel about the participation and consultation of the local community in those initiatives?

MR: Well, City Challenge was not that much successful to consult people or use the potentiality of the people. They tried their own way to get people from the people blah blah blah, but it was not that much of a fruitful exercise. As a result, City Challenge was a flop. We call it a flop. It didn't do much. But Cityside Regeneration was a good example of consulting the people, working for the people of the area, I would say.

AB: In what ways were people consulted and involved?

MR: OK, Cityside had a policy of taking people from the important organisations of the area, like *my* organisation which is the business association. Everybody taught each other important organisations to help the regeneration, to help improve the area. So they have taken me as a director. Likewise, other organisations like the Bangladesh Welfare Association, you know organisations like that, they were picked as a director. On top of that, there were another three elected representations from the community. The community elected another three people in the management. So, I know there was a chance of people from the City area came as a hand-picked director. But when you have a voice with other directors, a *community* voice I mean – three people directly elected by the community, hired from the community...other organisations were from the community. So you can say something sensible there and people will listen. I know that 15 people from the City – they are mostly from the City, they do not belong in the community – but when you say something sensible those people who were volunteer without any vested interests, they will listen to that. They are not...they didn't come here with a vested interest...we maybe on the management have a vested interest because I am chair of Brick Business Association, I have a vested interest to look after the interests of the small businesses. You know, this is why they listen to us and a combination of all these factors... Cityside was a very good successful organisation.

AB: And you felt that when you did voice your opinion you were listened to and that your views were regarded as valid?

MR: Yes, yes. I definitely can say that our voice was heard in that organisation. Let me tell you one example. Amongst the £11.4 million budget, there was a small pot of budget for the ethnic minority businesses. About £350,000 allocated for ethnic minority business support. And when I voiced my opinion that if you have money allocated for ethnic minority business support, you must allocate this money to the real ethnic minority business support agency. So they said initially that 'there is no ethnic minority business support agency, take this money to the Brick Lane Business Association'. And I said no. We are not a business support agency. We are a pressure group. So I proposed to create another organisation, which would be a business support agency, which is the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project. And that money went there. So they heard what the community said about how the money

should be spent. And that's how the Ethnic Minority Enterprise Project came into existence.

AB: So Cityside has now come to an end....

MR: It has, yes. The Council didn't want Cityside to carry on because Cityside had a lot of community involvement. But the leader of the Council, he doesn't want that... So, one day he went to the management committee meeting, he'd never been to the community management meeting, the Cityside management meeting. He went to the management meeting and he proposed that it should be dismantled. And I objected – I said 'no'. If we have to dismantle this big supporting agency, we should consult the community. The community should decide. Not the Council should decide. But Michael Keith, the leader, he proposed to dismantle the thing against our wishes... So he starved the organisation. I mean if you don't have any funding you just cannot carry on. But Leaside is still going, with full blessing of the Council! Why? That is the question we are asking.

AB: So, the regeneration in Spitalfields is still continuing even though Cityside has come to an end...

MR: Well, we don't see anything.

AB: So, you feel in terms of your involvement, that the regeneration has stopped?

MR: [Nods]

AB: OK. I know the Council, with the new planning system that is being introduced, has introduced the Statement of Community Involvement, the Community Plan, and the Local Area Partnerships, which are all run by Tower Hamlets. What are your thoughts on those?

MR: The Community Plan is supposed to be led by the community. The Council has their own plan. The Council has their own programme. The Community Plan, the partnership, is supposed to be led by people from the community, not by the Council. But at this moment, it is completely led by the Council. Everything is done by the

Council. The community has very little say. We have, the Brick Lane Business Association, have commissioned a seminar only three months ago. And here is about 100 leading people of Town Hamlets, all races – black, white, Indian, Bangladeshi, Somalian. And at that seminar there were three workshops. And these workshops gave full verdict of how they think the Community Plan is handled and how the community partnership is handled. And it's a *damn* criticism by the people, not by us. We, the Brick Lane Business Association, just collected the data.

AB: So your opinion of the Council in terms of getting people involved at the moment is fairly low?

MR: Yes. It is very low. They don't have very much respect about the Bangladeshis. The Council thinks that the community is not up to it.

AB: At the moment I know they are preparing their Statement of Community Involvement. I don't know if you know what this is?

MR: [Shakes head to say no]

AB: Well, its basically the way the Council will show how the local community will be involved in the decision-making process, and in planning and regeneration...

MR: Well, you think involvement in the future. But certainly over the last 40 years, people say that there is no involvement.

AB: Have you heard of the Statement of Community Involvement or have you been involved in the consultation process for it?

MR: No, I haven't. I'm an elected representative in the partnership...

AB: That's the Tower Hamlets Partnership?

MR: Yes, the Tower Hamlets Partnership and the CPAG. I'm from the community. The community elected me to be one of the CPAG.

AB: OK. Just a few more things I want to ask you about. Obviously Spitalfields has changed quite a lot over the past 20 years or so. Do you feel that the community has benefited from these changes?

MR: I think its definitely a good thing. But whether the local people have benefited as much as they should have is a different matter. But definitely there are people who have been benefiting a lot from all the projects. But it could have been better.

AB: And do you feel that local people are gaining employment opportunities and training skills that they wouldn't have had in the past? Are people being employed?

MR: Local people are not getting the benefit as much as they should. All the community groups – black, white, brown – all of them are criticising this.

AB: I mean one of the interesting things about Spitalfields is its location right on the doorstep to the City...

MR: And the Docklands. We're sandwiched by two giant financial institutions. And they are, I mean its like two giant elephants and the mice in the middle. And we are the mice. And even they cannot crush us because we are so small we can avoid them. But they *are* trying to crush us, the mice, but the mice is so small even they cannot crush us!!

AB: So do you think people in this area feel threatened by the expansion of the City and Docklands?

MR: Yes, they do. There is a concern. There was a meeting only two days ago with the local MP and people voiced their concern that the City is trying to push the people of this area away so that the City can take over and make it part of the City. Like they are crushing people this way. They are pushing people out. We have very much concern, but what can we do? We don't have enough power to do anything. We can just be concerned about it. People are very much concerned about being pushed away from this area...

AB: I spoke to the Spitalfields Development Group and the person I spoke to...

MR: Mike Bear?

AB: Yes. Well he said that he felt the new office blocks going up at the market, he said that they 'offered hope to the Bangladeshi community'. What would you say to that?

MR: What is the hope they are going to offer? A cleaner's job?! That's all they can hope for, the Bengali community. Mike Bear, well he's not a friend, but we worked together in various places like Cityside Regeneration where we worked on the same management committee, so I know Mike Bear. But he cannot say to me that they're opening a school for the Bengali people. It's a false statement.

AB: So, if the office blocks aren't providing the jobs for the Bengali community, what are the key needs of local people. What does the Bengali community need?

MR: Well, just give them opportunities to get a job in the City or wherever it may be. Build them up to that standard and open the door for these deprived people. They're the deprived people. People are getting qualifications, but when they go to the City to get a job, what do they find? That the door is not open for them. Because either their degree is not taken at the right time, or the degree is not with a good grade, because they studied in such a way that...they did not have the facilities to study. They studied in their mother's bedroom. And studying in that bedroom...I wouldn't say that they do not have any calibre or any drive...they do. But they do not have the facilities to use to be able to get a good grade. That is not recognised. That is not recognised. They have an idea like you have 2:2, 2:1, 1:1...but these people with their deprived situation, they cannot achieve as much as they can achieve in the right environment.

AB: So you feel that education, training, employment and opportunities for employment are the key needs?

MR: Yes. Opportunities are so important.

AB: Again, talking about the Bengali community, how do you feel local people feel about the planning system? Do local people know how to get involved in things, or

how to object to something they don't like, or how to voice their opinion? Do people find it accessible?

MR: I don't think so. Mostly, the Council receives some planning gain money from the developer and they just allow them to develop anything. I mean, Mike Bear he acts as an agent of a big company. He gets the Council round and gives them millions of pounds in the name of planning *gain* and he will get it. So, when there is a question of planning gain money, the consultation doesn't come, does it? When you get the money – this sort of bribe – and allow them to do whatever they like, you don't bother about your community or ordinary people.

AB: So, do you feel that culture and language are still a barrier to people in this area?

MR: To some extent, yes. But not in the new generation. The new generation is overcoming these problems. The older generations, the first generation, in any race, its like that. In this area during the sixteen hundreds, the Huguenots came with language barriers. Then came the Jewish people with the same language difficulties. But the second generation of Huguenots, the second generation of Jews, not the same as the first generation. The same applies to Bengali community.

AB: The final thing I'd like to ask you is if you could turn back the clock twenty years and start the regeneration of Spitalfields again, what would you do differently?

MR: Well, we would think about keeping the local people, not to push the local people from this area. Regenerate the buildings, regenerate the area *for the people*, not for the City. There are a lot of policies...I mean, here the rent is sky high. The Council could buy this property at a reasonable price and keep it for the community. And *that* should be the main objective of the regeneration of this area – not driving people away from this area. Local people need to get the benefit of the people who live here.

AB:OK, I think that's everything. Thank you so much for your help.